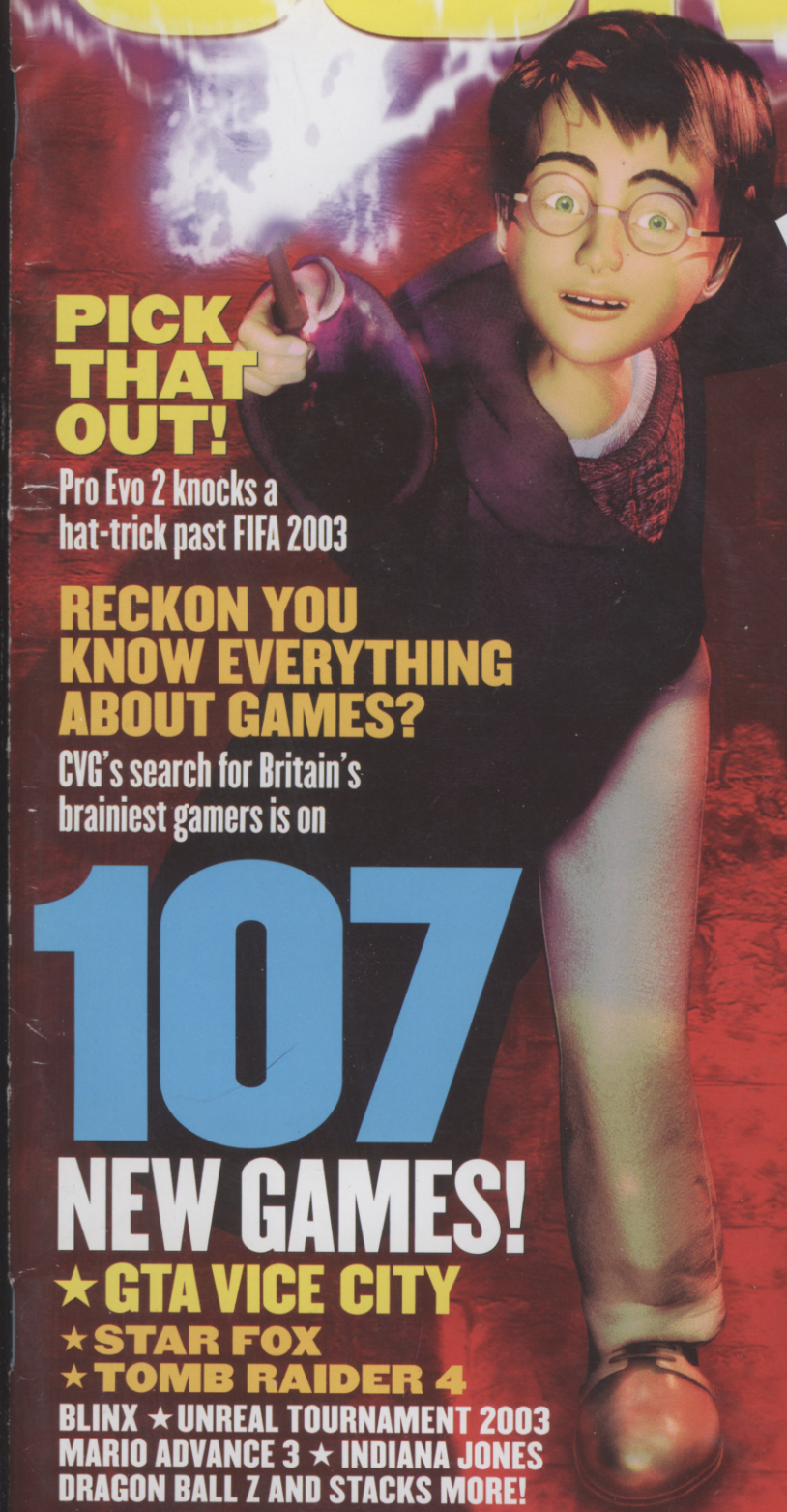
computer and video
games

32 GAMES RATED!



HARRY POTTER
And The Chamber Of Secrets

Spell-binding magic or a load of old Hogwarts? First reviews inside!

GBA, PSONE & PS2 ALL INSIDE!

PICK THAT OUT!

Pro Evo 2 knocks a hat-trick past FIFA 2003

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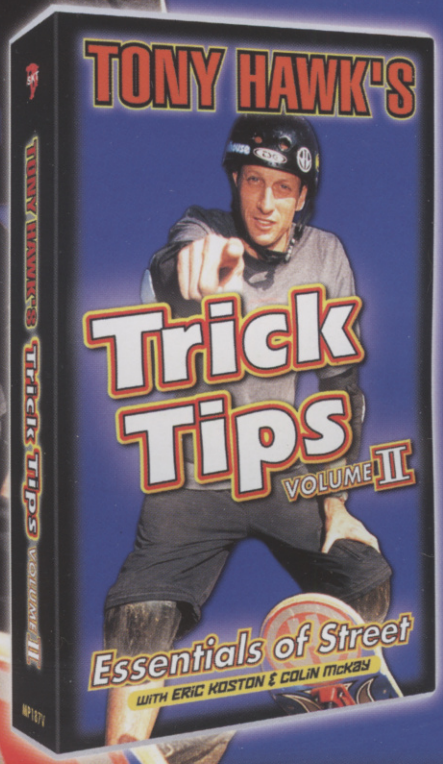

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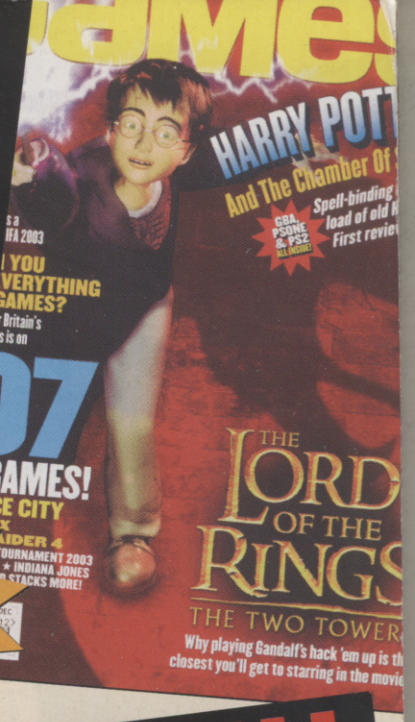

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REVIEW FEATURE

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Why Fox McCloud's new adventure is big, bold and beautiful – but no Zelda-slayer

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And what about FIFA 2003? Can it match PES2's fancy moves?

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The most amazing-looking shooter in the world ever

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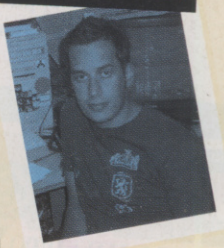
FOOTBALL FEVER

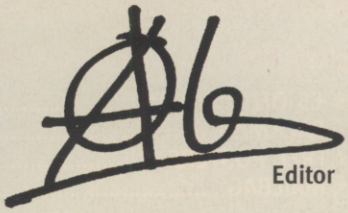


I've never seen anything like it. Thirty blokes squeezed around a PlayStation 2 pod in GAME on London's Oxford Street, all desperate to show off their ball skills on Pro Evolution Soccer 2. And all because they reckon they're in with a chance of winning CVG's national Pro Evo 2 championships.

Did you enter? If not, it's too late. The preliminary rounds are over, and the best will shortly be competing in the grand final that takes place in London in November. But you can still prove your worth on this must-have footie game, by learning CVG's game-winning tips on page 76 and then hammering your mates with your expert skills.

But if football's not your bag (like, what's up with you?), we've got exclusive reviews of the two biggest movie tie-ins this Christmas – Lord Of The Rings and Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets. Soon you won't be able to eat junk food or wipe your backside without Potter and Gandalf's mug staring back at you, but what are the games like? And are they worth sticking on your Xmas list?

All this and everything else you need to know about videogames this month is in this issue of CVG, so make sure you take it all in before forking out on the latest thumb-punishers.



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VA-VA-VOOM!
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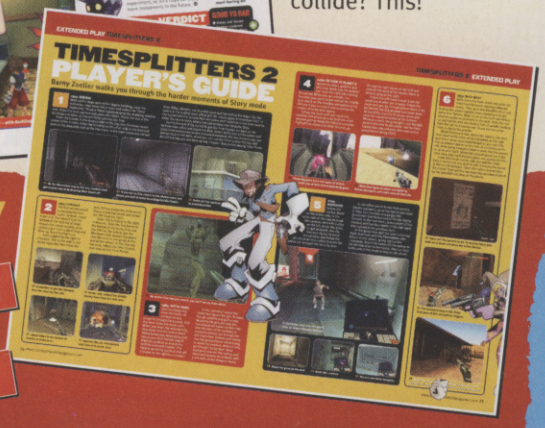
What happens when the mighty worlds of Disney and Final Fantasy collide? This!



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He's got to have them all!

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PLANET CVG

THE HOTTEST GAMES & GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

RARE GOES GREEN

PERFECT DARK, BANJO, AND CONKER NOW EXCLUSIVE TO XBOX

A quarter of a million pounds is a serious wedge of wonga. With that much cash you could probably buy the whole of the Isle of Wight, a harem of Playboy bunnies, and still have enough change for jumbo jet or two. But Microsoft is a bit more business-like than most of us, and tends to spend its cash a little more wisely. Dweebs!

Anyway, in a recent deal worth £239m, big daddy Microsoft acquired Nintendo's 49 per cent share of Rare. What, we hear you asking, does this mean for GameCube and Xbox owners?

Well, it goes something a little like this. The Perfect Dark, Banjo Kazooie, Conker, Blast Corps, Killer Instinct and Kameo brands are all now totally exclusive to Microsoft's monster console. As will be any future projects created by Rare. And Microsoft has confirmed that we can expect at least five Rare games to come on sale before the end of 2003.

The biggest disappointment for Cube owners will undoubtedly be the fact that Perfect Dark Zero will never appear on their console.

However, Nintendo will retain exclusive rights to Star Fox, Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong. In other words, Donkey Kong Racing and the as yet unnamed Star Fox project co-developed by Namco and Nintendo are still definitely coming out on GameCube.

Whether this new alliance can give Xbox the upper hand in the ongoing console war with GameCube is yet to be seen. But one thing's for sure: this cosy new relationship is not likely to hurt them one little bit.

The new-look Joanna Dark. And my, what a luvverly lady she is

FAIRY NICE

First out of the blocks from Rare on Xbox is Kameo: Elements Of Power, expected to hit UK shelves in spring 2003. And here are the first stunning screens of it, running on the mighty green machine.

Princess Kameo is cute, though she has enormous 'plates'

If you dream of playing with the fairies, go for it!

Help the Princess battle Dark King Thorn's army and break the curse that has seized the land! Or something

TOUCHED UP

Dark before her snazzy makeover

The delicious Miss Dark has received a stunning makeover for her Xbox debut. Hotter and deadlier than ever, the futuristic femme fatale is sure to stir up a storm on Xbox.

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RESIDENT EVIL 0 The future's looking very ugly on Cube, page 18

NINJA GAIDEN Tecmo classic revived on Xbox! page 22

XBOX LIVE: LAUNCH DATE AND PRICE ANNOUNCED

LIVE IN THE UK

Xbox's online gaming service, Live, is set to launch in the UK and across Europe on 14 March 2003, exactly one year after the console's original release.

The Starter Pack for Xbox Live will cost £39.99. This bundle includes the Communicator headset (used to communicate during online gaming), a 12-month subscription to the Live service, and online versions of Moto GP and Whacked!

Not a bad deal, we reckon. The only problem is you also have to fork out for a broadband connection. But Microsoft has stated that some of its broadband partners, including NTL, BT Openworld, and Telewest, will be providing special offers for Live customers.

CVG seized the a chance to 'go Live' at Microsoft's recent XO2 event in Seville, and were greatly impressed with Xbox's whole online experience. And we have to admit that with 50 Live-compatible games promised for 2003, including Halo 2, Project Gotham Racing 2, and Star Wars: Galaxies, Xbox's future seems to be looking brighter than ever.

FIVE ALIVE

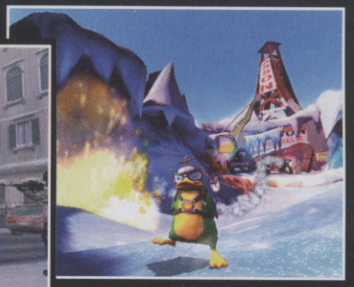
Unreal Championship, Mech Assault, Ghost Recon, Moto GP and Whacked! are the first five titles available for Live play from day one.

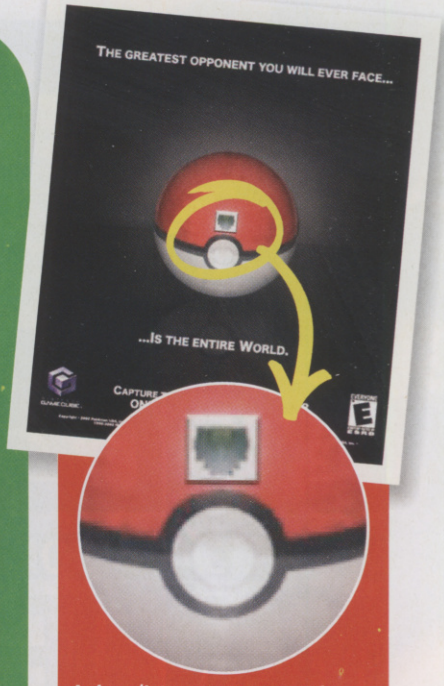
Bring cities to the ground while battling your friends online in Mech Assault

Unreal Championship will be the surest indication of Xbox Live's potential

Barge other riders off the track in Moto GP. Listen for distant yells

Show who's boss in Ghost Recon. Hoo-argh


If you're feeling quite mad, make Whacked! online your first choice



A phone/Internet connector on the Pokeball. This can mean only one thing

POKEMON ONLINE

IN THE PIPELINE! ISN'T IT?

Is this poster of Pokemon online for GameCube a fake? When asked, Nintendo denied any knowledge of it. Hmm.

Even if it is a phoney, this image is still managing to generate feverish excitement all over the globe. Because being able to trade, catch and battle the little critters online is surely the ultimate and perfect Pokemon experience. And Nintendo knows it.

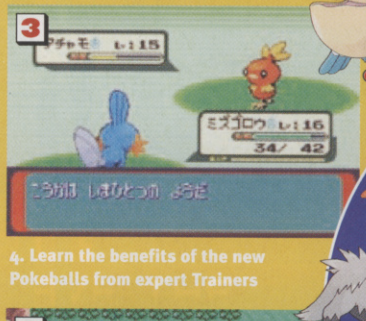
Rumours and speculation are rife at the moment, but CVG is hot on the trail of the hard facts surrounding Pokemon on GameCube. Be sure to stay tuned for all the latest in Planet CVG.

POKEMON RUBY AND SAPPHIRE ALL A-SPARKLE

MINI GEMS

GBA's upcoming Pokemon duo are on their way to putting all previous GBC predecessors to shame with a staggering 351 creatures to collect. And here are the latest tasty new screens of both games in full flow.

1. New Pokemon: this leafy lizard-like insect thing unleashes a pollen death spray. Whatever
2. The backpack returns with its many pockets. Hooray for that!
3. Two bird-type Pokemon face up against each other


4. Learn the benefits of the new Pokeballs from expert Trainers

STEEL BATTALION: THE DIRT!

MAN OF STEEL

EXCLUSIVE!

CVG recently met up with the producer of Steel Battalion, Atsushi Inaba, and pumped him for information.

● **CVG:** *Steel Battalion's graphics are brilliantly gritty and realistic. Where did you find inspiration for the visual style?*

● **AI:** *Saving Private Ryan. Steel Battalion is a game that's all about war, and the only images of war I can easily refer to are those of World War II. Saving Private Ryan shows a very striking image of war, and although the game is set 80 years into the future, the world you're playing in hasn't developed at all.*

● **CVG:** *The crazy controller seems very specific to Steel Battalion. Are there any plans to create a sequel that will utilise the same controller? Or would you like to create a new full-body robot peripheral that you wear?*

● **AI:** *[Laughs] The controller could be used for other sorts of games, but if I were to make Steel Battalion 2, I would want to create something new, something unique.*

● **CVG:** *We hear that there are plans for an online version of the game in Japan. Is this going to happen, and how many players will it support?*

● **AI:** *Yes, but I can't say how many players yet.*

● **CVG:** *Considering the game is going to be pretty expensive [around £150 in the UK], are we going to feel like we're getting our money's worth? Is there a lot to do? How many levels are there and how many robots can you unlock and fight with?*

● **AI:** *Yes. There are 18 robots and 11 levels. Once you finish them you go back and get issued with a new set of missions for each stage. If you complete the second batch of missions, you unlock an extra level.* ■

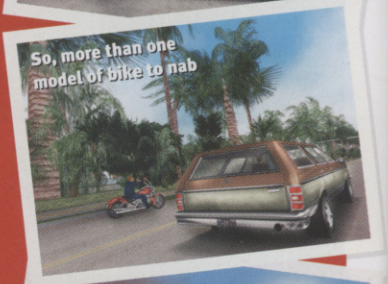
Don't be put off by all the dials. It's no more complex than, say, flying a 747

Night-sights? Like you'd miss a 200-ft robot

RECORD BREAKER

Not only does Steel Battalion steal the crown for most expensive videogame, it comes in the biggest and coolest box ever made. *Ever.*

COUNTDOWN TO VICE CITY



It seems like only yesterday that we loaded up GTA III and were totally blown away by the criminal capers down Liberty City.

Next stop, as you know, it's Vice City, which is promised to be significantly bigger with lots more opportunities to create havoc while hanging loose. The sequel to the ultimate 'Do Anything' game is due on November 8 – only a couple of weeks away – and CVG has been religiously counting down the days (okay, the hours).

We can't wait to turn over some nightclubs and ransack every hood hideout there is in the game. The new, vast indoor areas are going to make a huge difference to the experience. In addition, the new helicopter and boat will open things up, making way for spectacular getaways and super-sneaky espionage missions.

After playing Vice City we may never need to see another action movie again. We drool. You drool. Everybody drool. Review next ish.

E-READER: TESTED

CVG recently got its sweaty mitts on an American e-Reader and the five NES game cards released for it. And quite the odd and impractical little contraption it's proved to be, too.

The games come on a few cards – with strips of information on both sides of each – and you have to swipe all the strips in order for the game to load. Quite a faff! But considering that each game costs less than three quid, you can't feel too hard done by.

We'll be sure to bring you more info on the e-Reader once the Animal Crossing booster cards become available.

The five NES cards you'll get with the e-Reader

XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED

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Destroy your enemies. Destroy their cities. Destroy everything. Then go online with Xbox Live* where you can download fearsome mechs, awesome weapons and multiplayer maps. Fight solo battles or challenge opponents from around the world. And if, by chance, you come across a princess: kick her ass too.

XBOX

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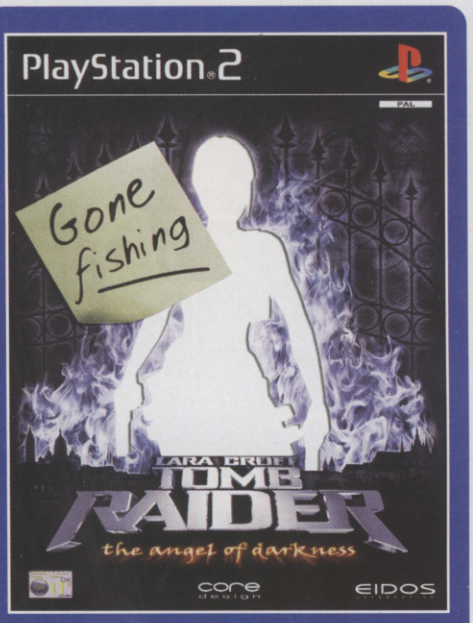
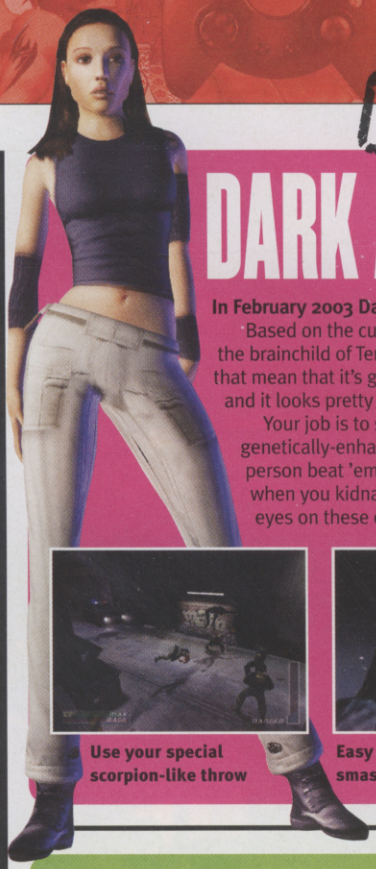


LARA CROFT: MISSING IN ACTION

If you're sitting there wondering where all the new Tomb Raider coverage has got to, truth is, so have we. Lara's sinister quest is sure to be one of the year's blockbusters, but CVG has seen absolutely nothing of the game since Sony's PlayStation Experience at the end of August.

Eidos has told CVG that the game is on target for release in November, but now this is almost certain to mean the end of the month, not 14 November as originally announced.

It is very unusual for a game to come so close to release without CVG getting so much as a glimpse of the finished code. Could the game possibly be in trouble? Let's see where things are at this time next month...



EXCLUSIVE!

DARK ANGEL DESCENDS

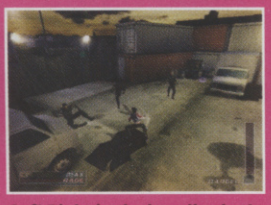
In February 2003 Dark Angel will be back-flipping onto PS2 and Xbox.

Based on the cult TV show currently showing on Channel 5, Dark Angel is the brainchild of Terminator 2 director James 'King of the World' Cameron. Does that mean that it's going to be great? Not necessarily. But we've seen it running and it looks pretty mean at this early stage.

Your job is to steer Max – who's a girl, and also happens to be a genetically-enhanced super-soldier – through a sinister and brutal third-person beat 'em up adventure in search of her sister. See, girls go a bit funny when you kidnap their family members. So without further ado, feast your eyes on these exclusive new pics of Max strutting her stuff on PS2.

Use your special scorpion-like throw

Easy on the eye, but Max could smash you to pieces. Nice girl



Oof! Right in the breadbasket! Max packs a serious punch

PES2 CHAMPIONSHIP FURY

"We had a couple of lads fighting earlier. Had to disconnect the controllers," says a concerned assistant when we ask how things are going.

It's the second day of the qualifying stages in our National Pro Evolution Soccer 2 Championship in the Oxford Street branch of GAME in London. Within seconds of everything being reconnected, the front of the shop is swarming with hopefuls eager for a place in the finals.

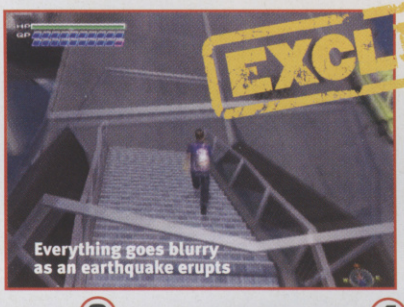
Next month we'll show you the devastation PES2 caused nationwide in the Regional Finals. Even if you didn't qualify, make sure you get down to one of the following play-offs because CVG is going to be there, taking names, taking photos.

"That's it, gentlemen, please form a nice, orderly queue. You'll all get a chance..."

LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE

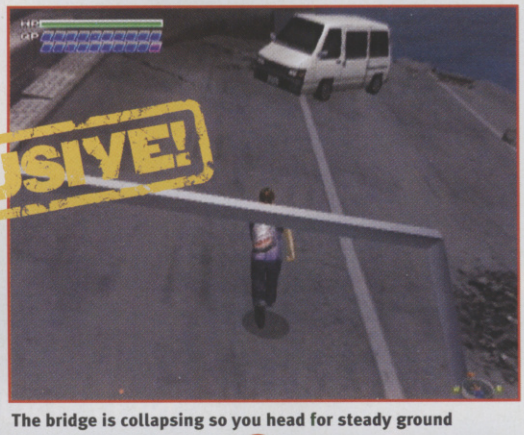
SOS Escape sees you fighting to stay alive in a city being ravaged by vicious earthquakes. On your journey to safety you uncover a story of deceit, corruption and greed and it soon becomes evident that these hideous natural disasters may not be 'natural' at all. Intriguing.

SOS Escape is a new type of survival adventure that sees you overcoming realistic and terrifying obstacles, and is set to come out on PS2 in December. It's by Irem, believe it or not, best known for its R-Type series – classic 2D sidescrolling shooters. How things change, eh?

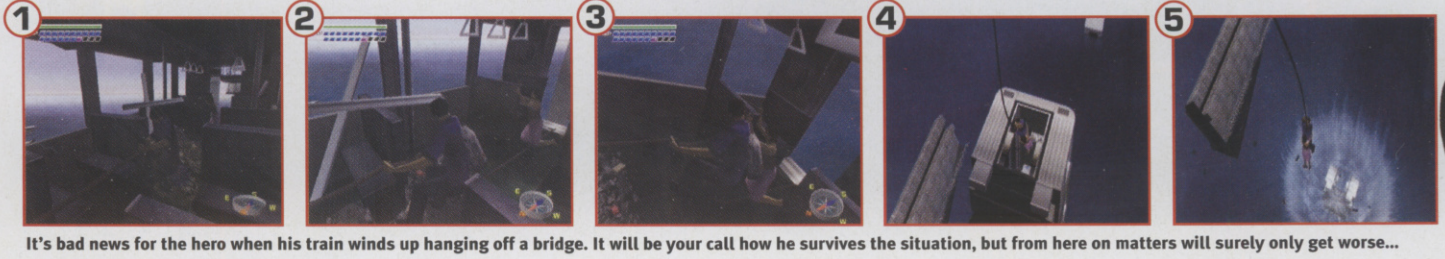


EXCLUSIVE!

Everything goes blurry as an earthquake erupts



The bridge is collapsing so you head for steady ground



It's bad news for the hero when his train winds up hanging off a bridge. It will be your call how he survives the situation, but from here on matters will surely only get worse...

Kiss goodbye to your turkey-sized UK controller

XBOX PAD SHRINKS

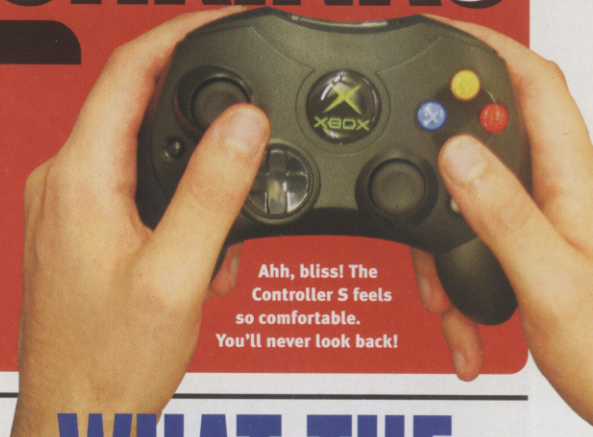
SMALL-HANDED XBOX OWNERS REJOICE!

From 1 November you'll be able to buy the Xbox Controller S in the UK for £29.99.

Xbox's standard pad is about the size of a human head, so this news comes as great relief for gamers without basketball-player hands. So give out a little "whoop!" because the days of chronic hand cramp (from using the original Xbox pad, anyway) are almost over.

Identical to the Japanese pad, the Controller S is much smaller and sleeker than the original UK pad. And the buttons are far better positioned – similar to PS2's Dual Shock layout – making it much easier to play games that require you to button-hop rapidly, such as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 and Dead Or Alive 3.

Microsoft had said that the smaller controller would not be released in Europe, but 'M$' is known for good service. There must have been so many requests! So unless you've got freakishly large palms and sausage-sized fingers, the Controller S should be on every Xbox owner's wish list.



Ahh, bliss! The Controller S feels so comfortable. You'll never look back!

Ride around on Chocobo-like dragon creatures, FF-style

Go to the pub and meet up with all your pals. Your round!

Cel-shaded visuals and Manga-styled characters look mint

LIVE THE FANTASY

If Xbox needs anything (apart from wheels to move it around), it's a great role-player title. True Fantasy Live Online is hoping to plug that gap and, as you may have guessed from the title, it's tailored specifically to massive multiplayer online play.

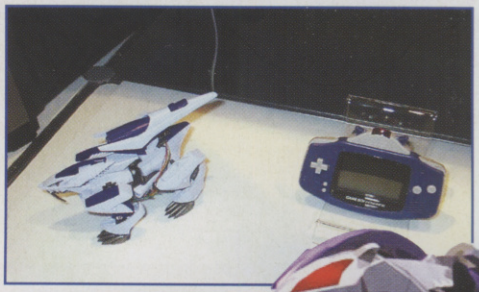
Team up, then head off looking for trouble

It'll take more than that to floor this big lug

It's set to hit UK shelves some time in 2003 – Microsoft refused to be more specific with the release date. But you can see from these gorgeous screens that TFLO definitely looks like it'll be worth the wait. More details as soon as we get 'em.

WHAT THE...

A game based on the old Z.O.I.D.S toy brand is being launched in Japan next spring. The basic action involves mad robots going head-to-head in deadly combat. The beauty of this barmy title lies, however, in the fact that your GBA is linked via infrared to a remote-controlled dog-like monster that mimics the motions of your in-game beast in real life. Get in!



Which buttons are for 'Sit!' 'Fetch!' and 'Walkies!'?

Mimic this, dog-boy!

HALO HALO, IT'S HALO 2

Halo 2 won't be out until Christmas *2003*, but you may need this much time to prepare yourself mentally.

According to producers Bungie, "Halo 2 is a lot like Halo, only it's Halo on fire, going 130 miles per hour through a hospital zone, being chased by helicopters and ninjas, who are all on fire."

With double the number of weapons and vehicles for Master Chief, Halo 2 will be online with Xbox Live. Until Christmas 2003, then...

Flaming ninjas just out of shot

CVG CHARTS

Chartage? Check. Release dates? Check. Go, go, go!

RELEASE DATES

GBA	ACE LIGHTNING	OCT 25
PS2/XBOX	COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3	OCT 25
PS2	DISNEY GOLF	OCT 25
XBOX	EGGO MANIA	OCT 25
PS2	LMA MANAGER 2003	OCT 25
GC	MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2	OCT 25
PS2	MAX PAYNE (PLATINUM)	OCT 25
PS2/XBOX/GC/PC	NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2	OCT 25
PS2	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2	OCT 25
GBA	ROBOT WARS – ADVANCED DESTRUCTION	OCT 25
GBA	SPYRO 2: SEASON OF FLAME	OCT 25
PS2	SUB REBELLION	OCT 25
PS2	SUMMONER 2	OCT 25
PS2/XBOX	TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE	OCT 25
XBOX	THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND	OCT 25
GC	TIMESPLITTERS 2	OCT 25
GBA	WWE ROAD TO WRESTLEMANIA X8	OCT 25
GC	ETERNAL DARKNESS: SANITY'S REQUIEM	NOV 1
PS2/PC/XBOX/PSONE	FIFA 2003	NOV 1
PS2	FORMULA ONE 2002	NOV 1
GC	NHL HITZ 2003	NOV 1
PC	PROJECT NOMADS	NOV 1
GBA	SMUGGLER'S RUN	NOV 1
GBA	SSX TRICKY	NOV 1
PS2	TWIN CALIBER	NOV 1
PC	AGE OF MYTHOLOGY	NOV 8
XBOX	BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER	NOV 8
GBA	DOOM II	NOV 8
GBA	ECKS VS SEVER: BALLISTIC	NOV 8
PC	GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER	NOV 8
GC	GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE	NOV 8
PS2	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	NOV 8
PS2	KNIGHT RIDER	NOV 8
XBOX/PS2	MICRO MACHINES	NOV 8
PS2	MONSTER JAM MAXIMUM DESTRUCTION	NOV 8
PS2	RATCHET AND CLANK	NOV 8
XBOX	SEGA GT 2003	NOV 8
GC	STAR WARS: CLONE WARS	NOV 8
GBA	SUPER DROPZONE	NOV 8
XBOX/PC/GBA	LOTR: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING	NOV 8
PS2/GBA	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	NOV 8
GBA	THE MUMMY: MANACLE OF OSIRIS	NOV 8
PS2	THE SIMPSON'S SKATEBOARDING	NOV 8
XBOX	TOTAL IMMERSION RACING	NOV 8
XB	TOXIC GRIND	NOV 8
GB	YU-GI-OH! DARK DUEL STORIES	NOV 8
PSONE	YU-GI-OH! FORBIDDEN MEMORIES	NOV 8
PC	WWE RAW	NOV 8
GC	CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX	NOV 15
PC	HAEGEMONIA: LEGIONS OF IRON	NOV 15
PC/PS2/PSONE /GBA/XBOX	HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS	NOV 15
PS2	MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2	NOV 15
XBOX	NBA INSIDE DRIVE	NOV 15
XBOX	RALLY FUSION: RACE OF CHAMPIONS	NOV 15
PS2	RED FACTION 2	NOV 15
PS2/XBOX/GBA	REIGN OF FIRE	NOV 15
PS2	ROCKY	NOV 15
PC	STAR TREK: STAR FLEET COMMAND 3	NOV 15
GBA	SUPERMAN	NOV 15
XBOX	SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL	NOV 15
PS2	SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKALIPS	NOV 15
PS2	LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS	NOV 15
XBOX	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION	NOV 15
PS2	WWE SMACKDOWN! SHUT YOUR MOUTH	NOV 15
PC	ACE LIGHTNING	NOV 22
PS	DANCING STAGE PARTY EDITION	NOV 22
GBA	EARTHWORM JIM 2	NOV 22
GC	HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS	NOV 22
XBOX	JEDI KNIGHT II: OUTCAST	NOV 22
PS2	KINGDOM HEARTS	NOV 22
GBA	LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE PROPHECY	NOV 22
GBA	MEDAL OF HONOR: UNDERGROUND	NOV 22
XBOX	MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE	NOV 22
GBA	METROID FUSION	NOV 22
GC	STAR FOX ADVENTURES	NOV 22
PS2	STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS	NOV 22
PS2	STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER	NOV 22
PC	TOCA RACE DRIVER	NOV 22
GC	TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON	NOV 22
PS2/XBOX/GBA/GC	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4	NOV 22

Release dates subject to change

CVG MOST WANTED

1 GTA VICE CITY (PS2)
Alex: "I get to ogle rollerblading nudie ladies without getting a slap!"

2 LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS (PS2)
Lee: "Lara's playing hard to get at the moment, but she'll come to her senses."

3 RESIDENT EVIL 0 (GC)
Paul: "Resident Evil's never been better since the switch to Cube."

4 LEGEND OF ZELDA (GC)
Jaime: "Can't wait! I won't need to buy another game for a year."

5 KIRBY: NIGHTMARE IN DREAMLAND (GBA)
Georgie: "That super-sucky vacuum is irresistible."

READER'S MOST WANTED

Krishan Pandya can't wait to get his hands on these forthcoming smashes

1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA (GC)
"Miyamoto magic on a next-gen console? Great!"

2 DEVIL MAY CRY 2 (PS2)
"More gun and swordplay from the coolest hero."

3 SOUL CALIBUR II (PS2, GC, XBOX)
"The sequel to the coolest fighter ever!"

4 RESIDENT EVIL 0 (GC)
"The spine-chilling masterpiece returns scarier then ever on the 'kiddie' console. Weird!"

5 NINJA GAIDEN (XBOX)
"Tecmo puts its greatest ninja, Hayabusa, into a game that brings new meaning to the word 'cool'!"

Send CVG a photo of yourself and list of five games you're most excited about playing, plus ten words on each telling us why, to:
Reader's Most Wanted, CVG, Dennis Publishing,
30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD
Email: mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk (subject: Reader's Most Wanted)

TOP FIVE GAMES TO OFFER YOU CAREERS ADVICE

1 POKEMON (GBC)
Learn to be a ruthless wheeler-dealer and hone your trading skills to prepare you for a high-flying city job.

2 AMERICA'S ARMY (PC)
The government should save the money spent on expensive recruitment adverts and use FPS America's Army to enlist new squaddies instead.

3 TETRIS (ALL)
If you drink tea from a thermos and enjoy showing butt-crack then get yourself on a Tetris building apprenticeship – it's the industry standard.

4 HARRY POTTER (ALL)
Extremely rewarding for the tiny percentage of the population with innate wizarding skills, utterly useless for the rest.

5 WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE (ALL)
If you crash and burn come exam time, you can always cling pathetically onto the hope that you'll win a fortune on a trashy TV game show.

GAME MULTI FORMAT TOP SELLERS

1	The Thing	PS2, XB, PC
2	Stuntman	PS2
3	Conflict: Desert Storm	PS2, PC, XB
4	Tekken 4	PS2
5	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2
6	Turok Evolution	XB, PS2, GBA
7	Blade II	PS2, XB
8	WWE Wrestlemania X8	GC
9	Total Club Manager 2003	PC
10	Battlefield 1942	PC

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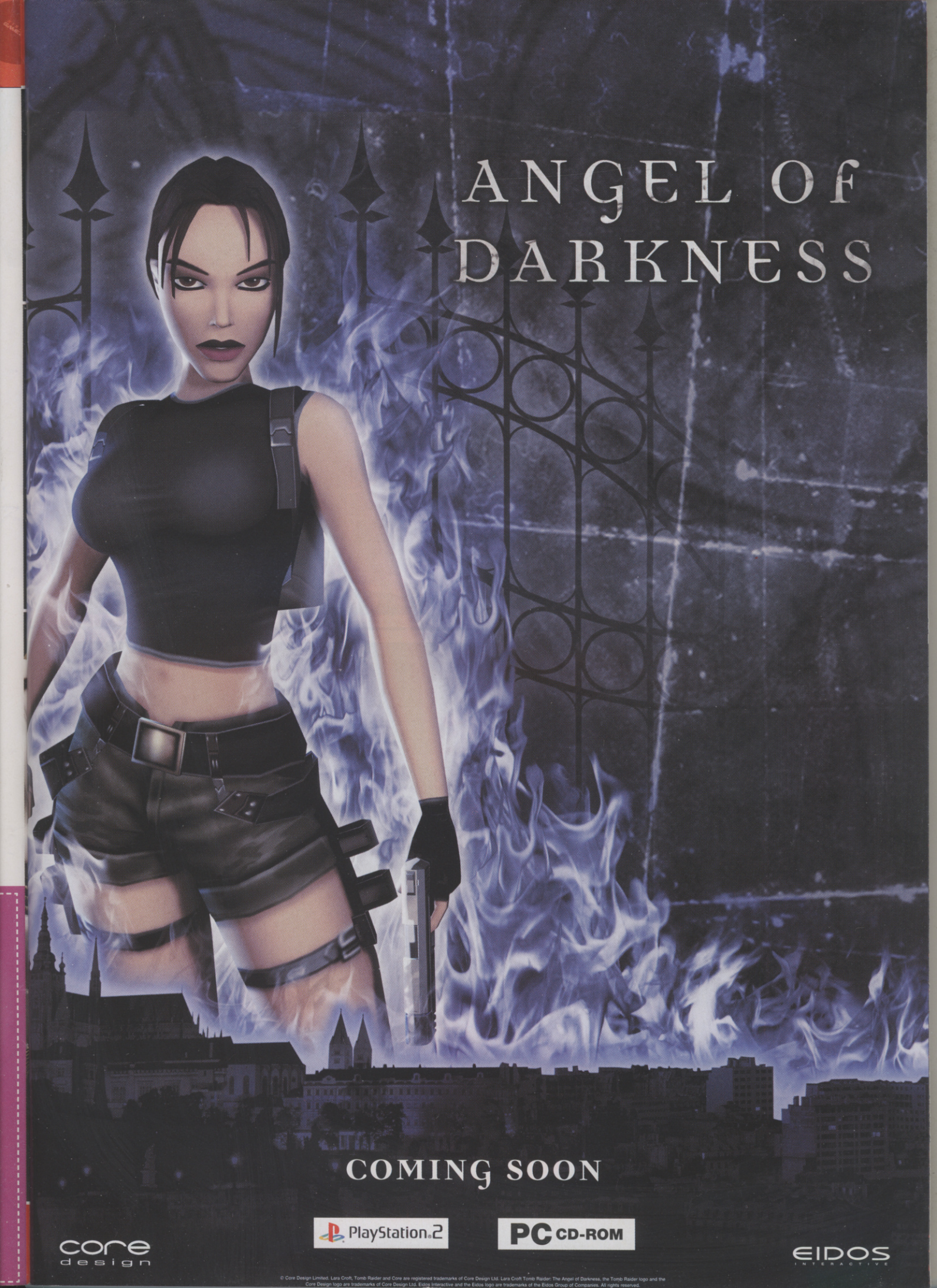

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Hot Shots

SIZZLING NUGGETS OF NEWS

MR DRILLER ON GAMECUBE

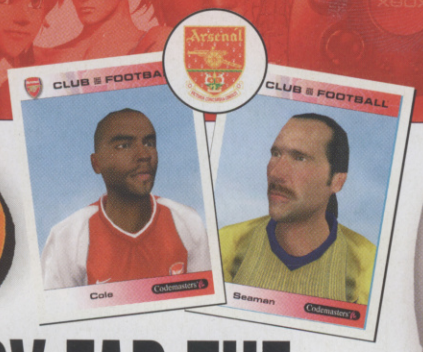
Mr Driller Land, for GameCube, is based around a themepark with a haunted house, futuristic world, Aztec ruins, etc. It's due next year. We can't wait!

VIRTUAL ON MARZ

The Virtual On series ranks among the Top Three Most Stylish In Games History, and the next in line is exclusive to PS2. No UK release date yet, though.

CAPCOM FIGHTING ALL-STARS

Expect this in your local arcade around Xmas. With eight-way movement and MK-style moves, it's gonna rock!



BY FAR THE GREATEST TEAMS

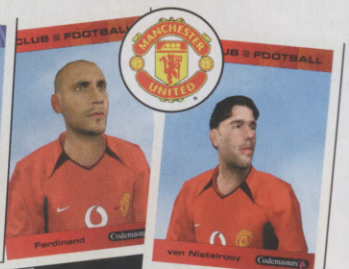
It's the chance of a lifetime! Okay so it's only a game...

EURO FOOTIE SERIES COMING TO PS2 AND XBOX

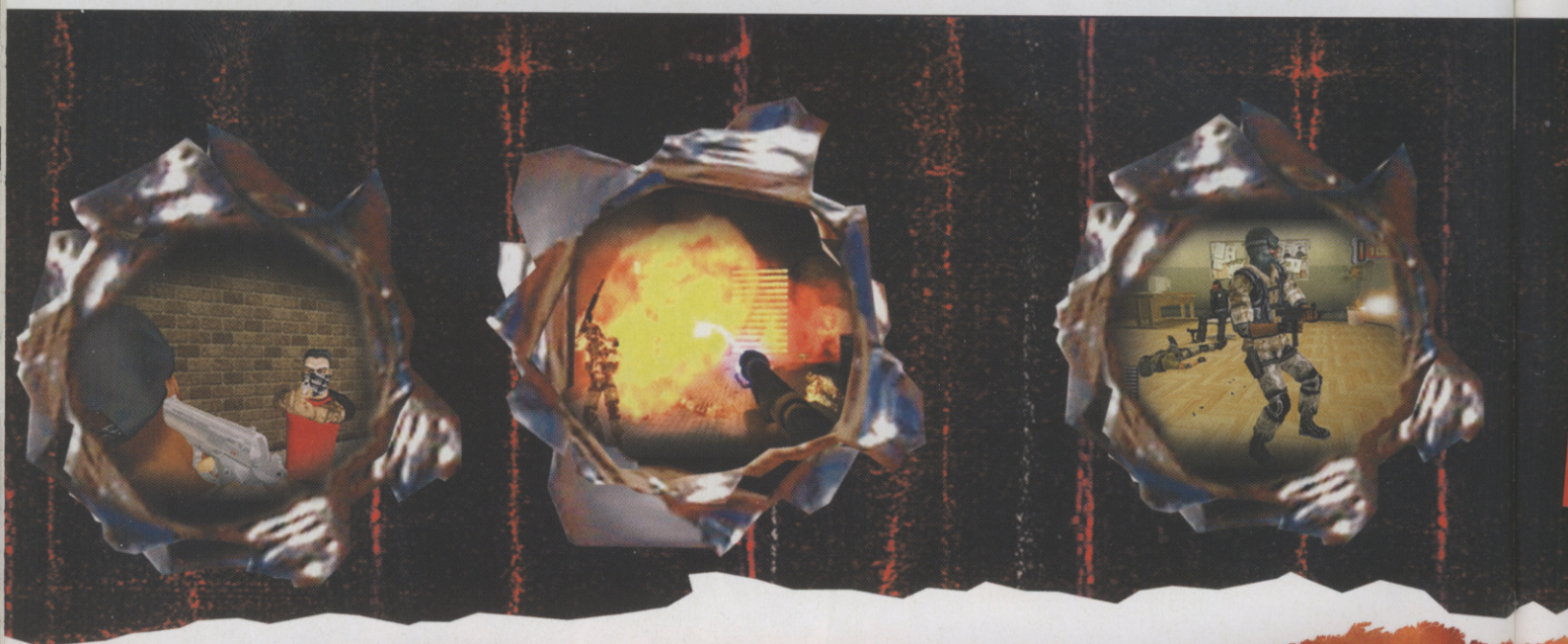
In spring next year, Codemasters will be demanding that football fans stand by their team with the launch of Club Football. The series will include 15 separate games, each dedicated to one of Europe's top football clubs.

According to Codemasters, the player likenesses will be the best ever, thanks to the company having 'unparalleled access' to the teams. But the biggest draw should be Career mode in which your name goes on the shirt of a player you create, after which you can join the squad!

Not a bad Ferguson, eh?



How will this Rio do?



MORTAL KOMBAT GETS DEADLY

Mortal Kombat used to be *the* most talked about game. It was stupid and gory, and people played exactly for those reasons.

Now that GTA has taken the lion's share of outrage, it's down to Mortal Kombat to prove itself as a stylish fighter equal to Tekken and Virtua Fighter. The version we played in May was unspectacular, but the most recent disc shows the game has a cool style all its own. Those of you hungry to memorise a load of new fatalities, and lust over this year's line leotard babes, will be wonderfully rewarded.

Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance is due on all the consoles, including GBA, around Christmas.

U, U, B, B, B, F, D, F, D, U...

...just to do a kick?

ANOTHER GETAWAY GANDERTHON

Here are the latest screens to be released for The Getaway, Sony's realistic answer to GTA Vice City – only without the speedboats and helicopters.

Ex-gangster Mark Hammond is taking damage, while himself taking hostages. The other guy featured must be Frank Carter, vigilante cop on the make. This is Digital Interactive Entertainment – aka *the future*!

Mark's curry farts were so bad, he had to get out of the car

HOT SHOTS

SIZZLING NUGGETS OF NEWS

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3

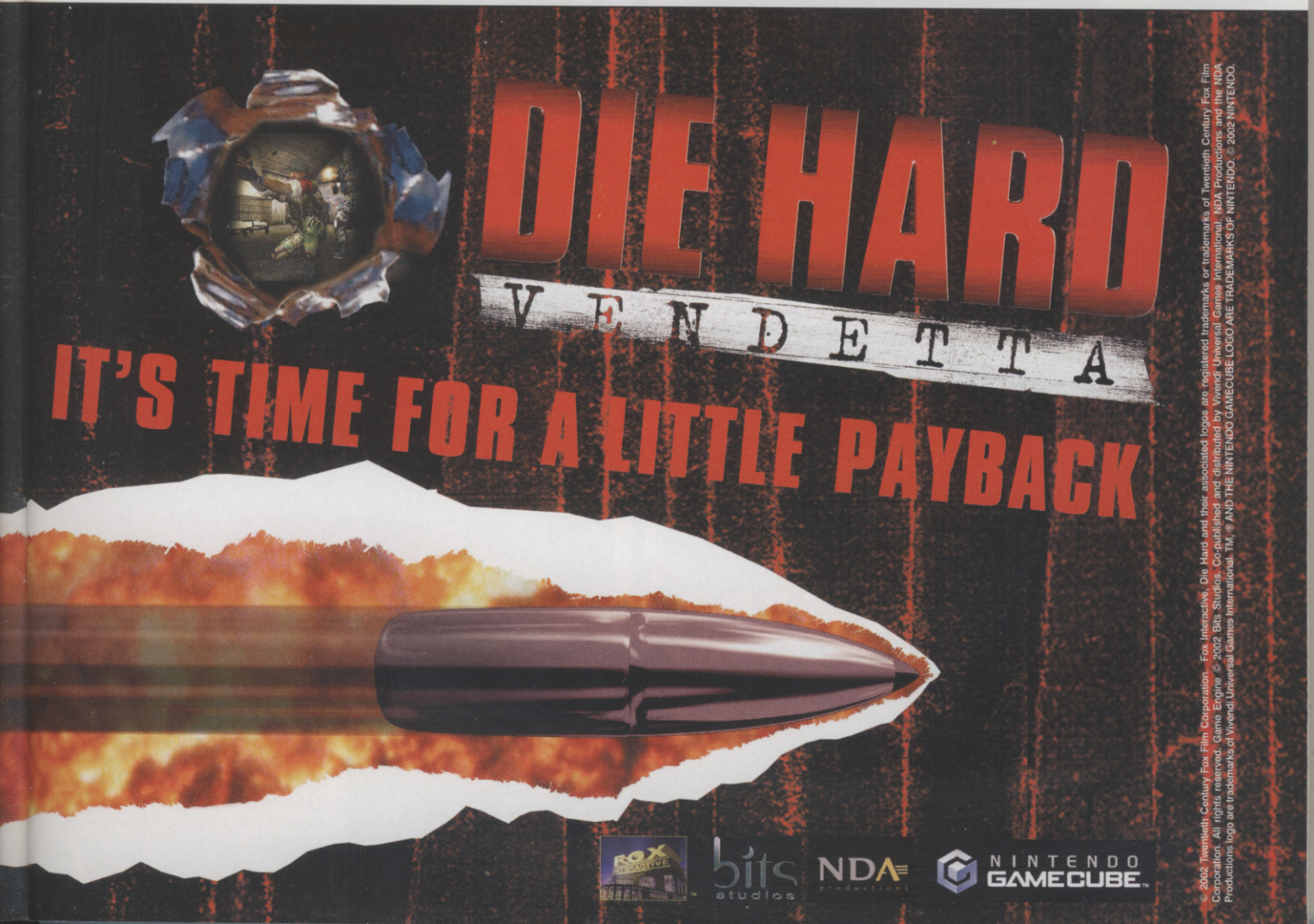
The release date has slipped until early 2003. Boo! Never mind, here's what we're all waiting for on Xbox from the mighty Sega...

WORLD CLUB CHAMPION FOOTBALL SERIE A 2001-2002

Sega's unstoppable Hitmaker division recently launched a football management game in Japanese arcades. It looks wicked, but we doubt we'll ever see it here.

KING OF ROUTE 66

Sega's sequel to 18 Wheeler will be exclusive to PS2. Developed by the ace AM2 team, it's expected next spring!



METROID OVERLOAD

If there's a funny noise emerging from CVG's offices at the moment, it may be because we're on the verge of exploding. "Why so?" we hear you cry. Well, there's a simple enough answer to that question: Metroid. Metroid Prime.

Yes, it's becoming almost impossible to contain our excitement over this game. And we knew you'd throw a paddy too if we didn't treat you to a brand new batch of Metroid Prime screens. Sooooo... Ta-da! We are *so* good to you.

YOU MAKE ME SICK

Slam down enemies with a judo throw

Ram the Sick Stick into his gut, then get out of the way and watch him puke

In Minority Report for PS2, GameCube and Xbox, you slip into the shoes of the movie's main hero John Anderton. Which means that you'll get to cripple enemies and make them puke using your electro-shock Sick Stick, hover around using speedy jetpacks, kick muchos ass hand-to-hand, and go wild with a massive arsenal of futuristic weaponry – including concussion rifles and electro-pulse grenades. Hallelujah!

Minority Report is expected to land on UK soil this December. So make sure you check into CVG next month, when we'll be uncovering all you need to know about this adrenalin-fuelled blockbuster spin-off.

The broken bottle is the thug's choice. No finesse, just brutal cutting

In case you missed the explosion...

I'LL CUT YA!

In XIII you can turn any object into a deadly weapon. Bottle your attackers, stab them with pens, club enemies with fire extinguishers and paper-cut them to death with loose sheets of A4. Okay, you can't paper-cut people, but pretty much anything else goes.

It's heading to all three next-gen consoles in March 2003, but the Xbox game is the only version that you'll be able to play online with up to 15 other players.

Rebecca enters the Chambers. Ho, ho

"At least we're off that goddamn train"

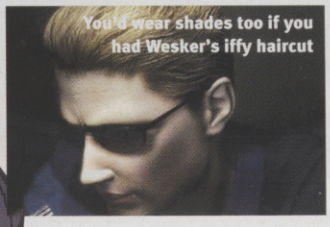
ZEROING IN ON THE NEXT RES EVIL

Say your prayers now for our beloved GameCube. Every scrap of info released on Res Evil O makes us certain the little box has something fully horrific in store.

As you can see, Albert Wesker is a guaranteed fixture, as is William Birkin, before he injected himself with the T-Virus to become the mutant seen in Resident Evil 2.

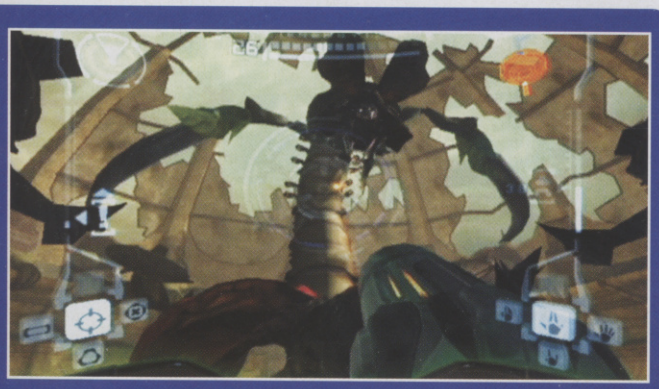
Sick? Not as sick as you will be Willy

See what happens when you order the fresh lobster at Chez Resi, Billy?



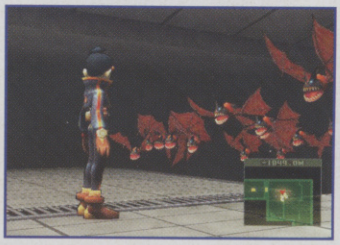
You'd wear shades too if you had Wesker's iffy haircut

Next issue we'll be taking you through the opening hours of the story that started it all. Sorry to leave you hanging on tenterhooks between times, but here's something to feast your eyes on while you wait; something... ugly!

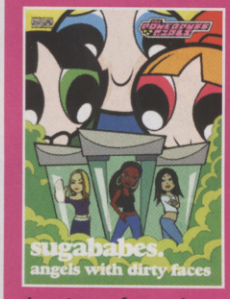


MINTY FRESH BREATH

Breath Of Fire V: Dragon Quarter on PS2 is looking mighty cool. And as you can see from these new pics, the series has undergone a beautiful visual overhaul. Cel-shaded games are often criticised for being a graphical cop-out, but the main characters and vast array of nutty monsters in BoF V look gorgeous and amazingly detailed. See for yourself!



RELISH THE DIRTY GIRLS!



Insert manufactured-pop-band comment here

The video for sexy Sugarbabes' new song is to appear in PS2's Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage. In turn, the Girls will star in the 'Babes pop promo. Reports that Bubbles, Blossom and Buttercup lay on the angry cuss-ups mid-song are yet to be confirmed.

We still fancy the girls, even though they're 2D

A TASMANIAN DEVIL'S AT LARGE

WANTED

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P2 – April 2002

"Taz Wanted looks absolutely great"
Max – April 2002

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GAME LAB

BBC

Official Battle Report

ROBOT WARS
EXTREME DESTRUCTION

COMPETITOR Agro-botic
OPPONENT Dead Metal
ARENA New York Subway
COMMENTS Very slow and heavy, lacking in weaponry. Must do better.

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DESTROYED NOV 2002

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TURN THE LIGHTS OUT AND PRETEND IT'S THE END OF THE MOVIE

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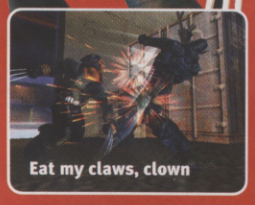
REVENGE IS SWEET FOR WOLVERINE


Eat my claws, clown

Mr Knee, meet Mr Crotch

We've waited a long time for a dedicated Wolverine adventure, and it seems developers Genepool have worked hard to do the theme justice. It's the movie version of Wolverine, dressed in black, making his brutal assault on the enemy look even more sinister.

One of the best ideas is the inclusion of a sense mode, which allows you to see through Wolverine's mutant eyes in order to track down his foes.

Wolverine's Revenge isn't due until early 2003, but will release simultaneously on GameCube, Xbox and PS2.

The smart-looking Nokia 7210 will run these games. We want one!

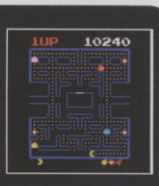
POCKET BILLIARDS

We honestly don't want to know if you've got a high score on Snake, Snowboarding or Bumper on your mobile. They're crap. But starting on 24 October, Vodafone is making it possible to play games that include Mr Driller, Space Invaders, Pac-Man, even Billiards – if you've got a phone that'll run them, mind.

The new service is called Vodafone live! and is the result of a deal between Namco, Taito, and newcomers G-Mode to bring Java-enabled games to mobiles in Europe. It costs £1-5 to download each game using WAP, after which it's yours to keep. How many games you can store at once depends on the phone.

Compatible phones at the moment include the Panasonic GD87 and Nokia 7650 (the huge camera one!), but if you get a Sharp GX10, it comes with a shooter called Stormy Sight already loaded. Check out the list of games, and start saving for that phone.

NAMCO
Pac-Man
Galaxian
Xevious
Gator Panic
Mr Driller

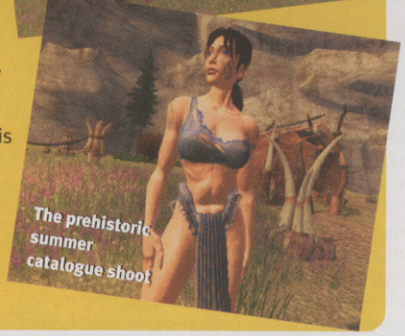


TAITO
Space Invaders
Puzzle Bobble
Darius
Arkanoid
Bubble Bobble

G-MODE
Stormy Sight
Stormy Sight II
G-Mode Poker
Skip & Hops
G-Mode Kung-Fu
Sub Vs Destroyer
G-Mode Billiards

SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME...

Alright, darlin', fancy a snog?



Another big To Be Confirmed for Xbox, roughly slated to launch in '03, is Lionhead's almost aptly named BC. This caveman quest for survival is among the most ambitious titles in the pipeline for Xbox.

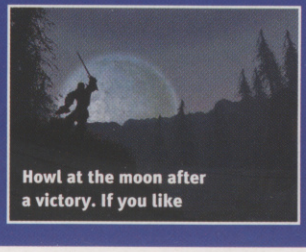
Its theme of nurturing cavemen to become strong enough to fend off predators is unique, man versus ferocious beast like you've never experienced before. A new batch of screens was handed to CVG this month, and we're all pretty floored by them. We'll have more on BC... TBC.

ABSOLUTELY FABLE-OUS

In keeping with its inherent theme of evolving a character, the name of Project Ego has recently been changed to Fable. And lo: we've not a lot more to say on the matter.

Well, perhaps only to remind you that a) this game still looks like a strong case for buying an Xbox, and b) it will still be next year before developer Lionhead has made the game exactly perfect. Here are a couple of the latest screens to keep you believing.

Evil players look like this


Howl at the moon after a victory. If you like

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NEWS FLASH

STUDENTS: READ THIS!

Are you The Ultimate Student Gamer? Answer "no" if you're not a student, also "no"' if you're no good at games. If you do qualify, enter the Xbox Play More Challenge at your college, taking place throughout the autumn term. Finals will be held in December, and the winner gets £10,000! Regional champions will each receive a year's subscription to CVG, an Xbox and a bunch of games including Halo, Colin McCrae Rally 3, Crazy Taxi 3, Quantum Redshift and Blade II. For more info, visit **www.xbox.com/uk/challenge**

RECORD TV ON YOUR PS2

The Reuters News Service has reported that a TV Tuner is on the way for PS2, developed by Sony Computer Entertainment, enabling the PS2 to record programmes from TV. It's being designed to work alongside the HDD, and will initially be sold as an upgrade. It has also been speculated that the TV Tuner/HDD combo could even become part of the standard PS2 set-up in future. Stay tuned.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3 XBOX?

Could Metal Gear Solid 3 be exclusive to Xbox? This is what CVG is hearing on the grapevine, although Konami Europe won't comment. It's rumoured that Microsoft initially tried to buy total exclusivity, but settled for a head start of an as-yet unconfirmed period of time. There are also rumours of M$ trying to buy Capcom outright...

GC DONKEY KONG IN FULL SWING

A new Donkey Kong game is in the works for GameCube. No details yet, but the fact that Rare isn't developing it means that it will most likely be an internal project at Nintendo's HQ in Japan. If this game is overseen by maestros Takashi Tezuka and Shigeru Miyamoto, it'll be very special indeed.

FIGHT FOR CHEAPER GAMES

If you're always moaning about how games are too expensive, whinge with like-minded people: **www.fairplay-campaign.co.uk/front.htm**

DINE WITH LARA

Domino's Pizza is holding a nationwide draw to find one lucky person and their friend who'll have dinner with a Lara Croft looky-likey, then take the Eurostar to Paris for a weekend break. The competition is open to everyone who picks up a leaflet from a Domino's Pizza store between 14 October 2002 and 1 January 2003. The winner also gets a life-size Lara mannequin with a certificate of authenticity signed by the Angel Of Darkness development team. Two runners-up get a copy of the game and a mannequin. Five third-place winners get a framed sketch of Lara, signed by the game's artists.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4

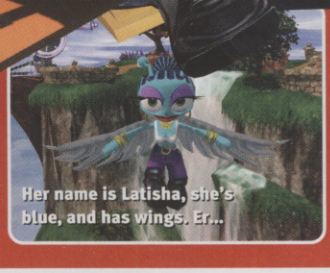
Go to www.sigames.com for the new screens and all there is to know about Championship Manager 4, for PC. You will be able to see how the new real-time matches look, the long-awaited improvement to a game that previously only allowed managers to read about their team's performance. We're expecting Championship Manager 4 to hit the streets in time for Christmas.

MO TOEJAM AND EARL ON XBOX INNIT

If you're under the age of 18 you won't remember the Toejam and Earl games that died out with the Mega Drive. The third in the series, All Funked Up, was originally in development for Dreamcast. But since the Dreamcast died out too, it has been resurrected on Xbox.

Funkotronians Toejam (three-legged) and Earl (big guy) have hooked up with sexy (?) newcomer Latisha to retrieve the 12 sacred albums of funk. It's a free-roaming adventure, in which you can stray from the main story as much as you like, enjoy the minigames, smell the flowers. Just so long as you make the Great Funkapotamous happy in the long run. We can't even begin to explain any more than that, only to say that you can expect this madness to begin on your Xbox in early 2003.

Toejam is staggered by her amazing pom-poms



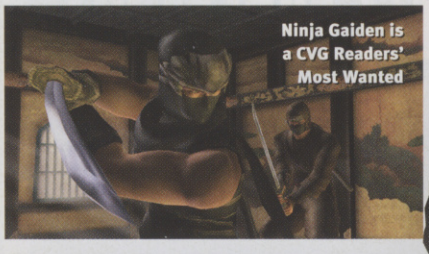
Her name is Latisha, she's blue, and has wings. Er...

NINJA GAIDEN (SLIGHT RETURN)

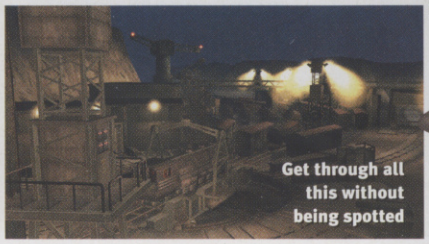
Dead or Alive's very own Ryu Hayabusa is set to return in a brand new Ninja Gaiden adventure.

Though nobody outside the hallowed halls of Tecmo's Team Ninja has laid hands on the game, a new batch of images has just been released and we've been getting steamy over them. Thanks to the classy DoA debut on Xbox, lead character Ryu Hayabusa needs no introduction; we're prepared to follow him into whichever kind of game he winds up in next. Which happens to be an Xbox-tastic revision of the classic '80s action adventure.

Ryu is as stylish as it gets, with a range of moves that increases as your skill in the fray improves. If your skills are CVG standard you could be performing techniques that your mates will never see. Ninja Gaiden is nothing more complicated than a hack-n-slash, button-mash your way through it escapade, but it's sure to prove stiff competition against Capcom's Onimusha series when it hits in early 2003.



Ninja Gaiden is a CVG Readers' Most Wanted



Get through all this without being spotted

There's 29 levels and 60 different combos per hero

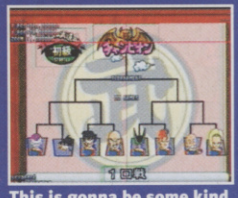
DRAGON BALL Z PS2 STYLEE

If you're a Dragon Ball Z fanatic there can be no finer offering than all-out fighting on PS2. Perhaps. Evidently based on the most popular 3D fighting games around, only with 'Insert Popular TV Series Characters Here' as the basic idea, this does – as they say – what it says on the box: a Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Fighting Game, and goes on sale 28 November. Here are some Super Saiyan shots.

Size doesn't matter when you're a Super Saiyan

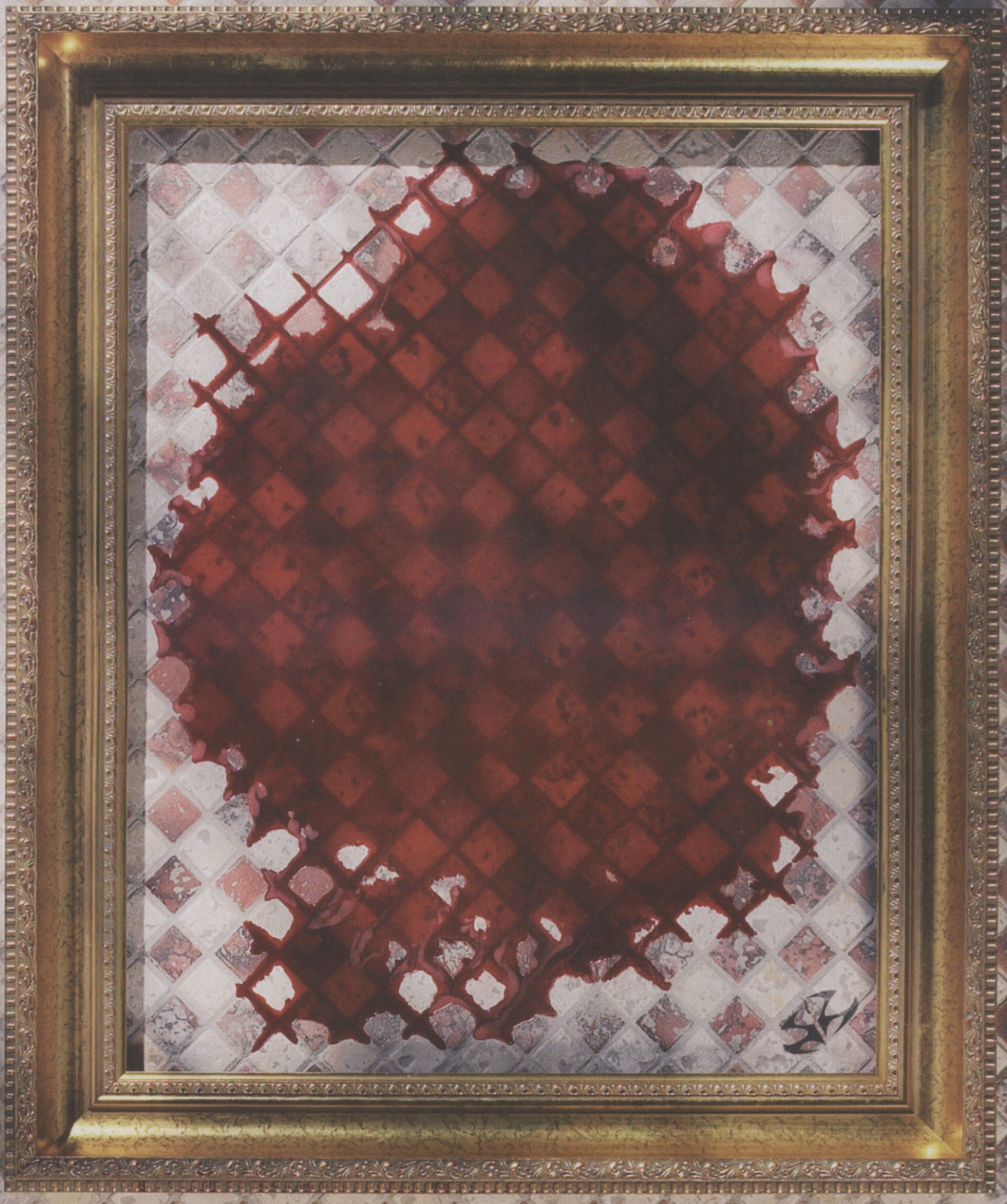
Is this the ultimate Dragon Ball Z fighting experience?

There are 23 DBZ heroes to choose from. Eeny-meeny...



This is gonna be some kind of knockout competition!

THE ART OF AN ASSASSIN



THE THROAT CUT
Blood type "AB" on mosiac tiled floor
Specialist equipment: Scalpel
Produced in India 2002.

Donated by: Dr. Von Kamprad

PC CD-ROM PlayStation 2 XBOX

HITMAN 2
SILENT ASSASSIN

Io-Interactive

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

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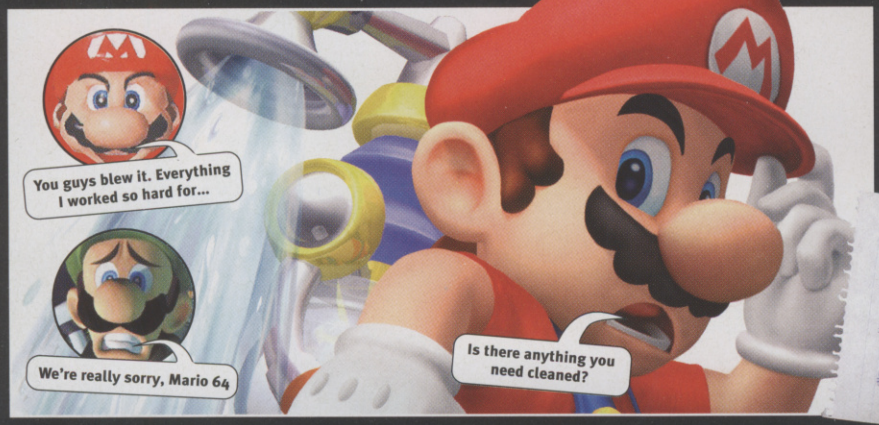
CACKMAN'S THOUGHT OF THE MONTH
That guy on the BT adverts has to be the crappest games player in the world. He's been playing that game solidly for months and he's still only on level six.

CACKMAN

The independent voice of the free gaming nation

MARIO SUNSHINE: THE TRUE FACTS



People who don't really know what they are talking about are calling Mario Sunshine a 'classic game'. In fact, it's the most disappointing Mario game since the turnip-plucking tragedy that was Super Mario Brothers 2. Here's why:

1 THE CAMERA IS CRAP
In Sunshine you do it all yourself because Mario 64's cameraman, Lakitu, resigned as soon as he heard the stupid voice he'd been assigned.

2 THE NEW CHARACTERS SUCK
Did those big-nosed idiots fail the audition for Rayman or something? Cackman has a dim and distant recollection that Nintendo used to make good characters.

3 THE PLOT IS A FARCE
The guy doing the graffiti is a completely different colour to Mario. The difference is obvious. The trial is a joke: if they worked together, the place would be clean in an afternoon.

4 IT'S TOO HARD
Kids, on the whole, like Mario games. Well, they won't like this one. Take the first objective: master a tricky water squirting thing to defeat a boss. Every time you hear a child crying, this game has caused it.

5 THE WATER PUMP
A pressure cleaning device. Great. Tell you what, get Luigi to bring over his Hoover and you two can clean Cackman's flat. Oh, for the days of frog suits and raccoon tails...

6 TICK-TOCK CLOCK TIMES TEN
Nintendo was going to call this game 'Falling Down', but there was already a film called that. Missing a precision leap onto a thin wire means starting again from the bottom. Not fun.

7 POINTLESS SHADOWS
Mario appears as a shadow when there's scenery in the way of the dumbass camera. What's the point? You still can't see where you're going.

8 SPRINGY ROPES
How is Cackman meant to land on them when a) they're so thin and b) your shadow doesn't appear on them, even when you're directly above?

9 THE MISSIONS ARE DULL
Show Cackman one bit of the game that displays the genius of Wet-Dry World and Tiny-Huge Island. And we'd rather go on holiday to the Mushroom Kingdom than Isle Delfino, thank you.

10 "SHINE GET"
How can you expect Cackman to like any game that doesn't say "Shine Get!" when you GET a SHINE? Nintendo Europe has ruined it for us all.

LETTERS TO CACKMAN

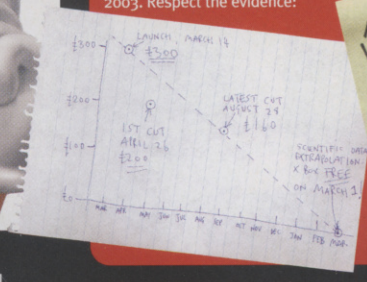
Dear Cackman,
How come are there no photos of you in the magazine?
Daniel Lewis, via email
You know that fit girl in your class who fancies you because you like videogames? I'm like her. I don't really exist.

Dear Cackman,
Don't you think it's a bit strange that Nintendo has sold Rare to Microsoft?
John Perry, Chester
It's not strange because it's not even remotely interesting. Much like yourself, no?

XBOX FREE BY FEBRUARY. FACT!

Cackman didn't learn a lot at school, but he does know that as soon as you draw a graph to illustrate something it automatically becomes a Scientific Fact.

As the price of the Xbox continues to fall – motivated solely by Bill Gates' guilt about being so rich and not the fact that the world would rather wash a tramp's bits than buy one – Cackman can exclusively reveal the day Xbox becomes free as 1 February 2003. Respect the evidence:



The graph: it is NEVER wrong. Look and learn, readers

NOVEMBER PAIN (OWWWW!)

Because Guy Fawkes Night wasn't really sufficient, Cackman's given the whole month of November a special name. It will now be known as the 'Why Is The Games Industry Run By A Bunch Of Retards That All Release Their Games In The Same Month' month.

November is the month you get to buy GTA: Vice City, Tony Hawk's 4, Tomb Raider, Pro Evolution Soccer 2, SmackDown, Lord Of The Rings, Red Faction 2, Kingdom Hearts, NightFire, Aliens, Auto Modellista, Blinx, Splinter Cell, Dead To Rights, Eternal Darkness, Harry Potter, Star Fox Adventures, Unreal Tournament 2003, Sim City 4, and hundreds of other games far too boring to mention. Feeling wealthy?

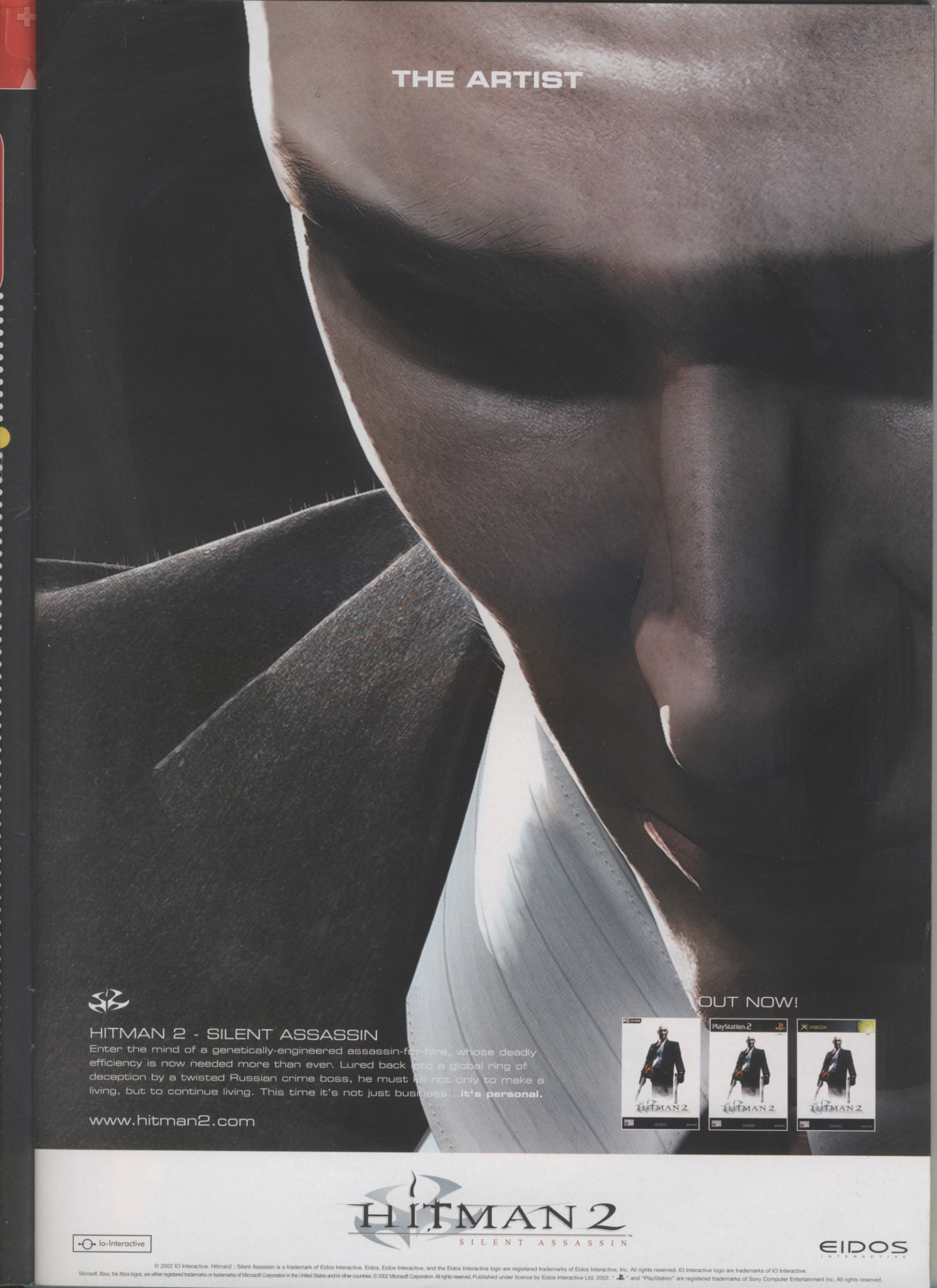
Cackman understands the going rate for a human egg is about £1500. Good luck extracting those from a female member of your family without her knowing. Pick a fit one, though: if she's fat, ugly and stupid, you get much less. Apparently.

Cackman called Sony to see why this stupidity is so rife. A lady, who Cackman assumes makes these decisions, said: "Good afternoon, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe", *not* a very reasoned argument.

WRITE TO CACKMAN

You lot must have ideas. Questions. Theories. Write to Cackman at the usual address, and the best one will win an awesome prize! Senders of anything Cackman considers to be crap will be subjected to GBH in text form on this very page. Come on! You want to be famous, don't you? What else have you got to live for in your stupid little lives?

Cackman's opinions aren't necessarily those of CVG



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HUNTER'S MAILBAG

Fancy courting controversy? Don't keep your opinions to yourselves. Write to us, then all your friends can have a hearty chuckle at your expense. Great! You can send a letter to: Mailbag, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD. Alternatively, email us at mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk.

GOLDEN BONE

TEKKEN BORE

As much as I enjoy reading you mag, I am writing to complain about your review of Tekken 4 – I think it was rather one-sided. I don't think you're very fair moaning about changes Namco has made to the gameplay. Here are my reasons why it's different from previous Tekken titles.

Firstly, you complain about Christie being Eddy Gordo in disguise. True, but what about Tekken Tag, where most of the characters had almost exactly same moves? That's why Namco axed characters like Wang, Bruce, Kunimitsu, Anna and Ganryu. In T4, they've gone for quality over quantity, with each character having their own unique fighting style.

My second point: "Jin Kazama isn't", you said. Well, get used to it, or go back to playing Tekken Tag! In TTT there were four characters who used Mishima-style Karate. With Heihachi and Kazuya already using this style of fighting, Namco was right to make the Tekken 4 incarnation of Jin a completely different character.

I thought TTT played like a dream in the arcades. The changes Namco has made are for the best. If T4 played the same as any other Tekken title, you'd probably complain about it being the same old formula as before. I feel that CVG is clearly biased against the Tekken series, saying Virtua Fighter 4 is better than T4. I for one strongly disagree.

David E. Scully, Woking

Over to CVG's Paul, who reviewed Tekken 4: "I loved Tekken 3 so much I wanted to BE Jin Kazama, so I had to think very hard about what I said in the review. And it's because I love Tekken this much that I had to come down hard on points like Christie being a waste of a new character, and the fact that Jin is so very different from his incarnations in T3 and TTT. Marduk is okay, but isn't as groundbreaking as King, Ling or Lei. I won't waste my time with him, sorry.

I'm hoping the next Tekken will be a fully developed sequel, as T3 was over T2. You're right that T4 and VF4 are very different, but VF4 moved the VF series on so much more than T4 has, and that has to be reflected in the review. Die-hard Tekken fans will ignore this and love T4 anyway. But you wait to see what Namco is capable of given enough time (two years at least), then you'll see a difference. It's a 7-out-of-10, David, and you know it. But that doesn't mean you can't still enjoy it."

JOYTECH

Your pearls of wisdom could blag you free gear! We've teamed up with those purveyors of fine add-ons at JOYTECH to offer each month's Golden Bone letter-writer some free quality peripherals. If the GameCube goodies here don't grab you, we've also got bundles for Xbox, PS2, PSone and GBA. So be sure to mark your name and address clearly.

CENSORED CVG!

I am writing to you to complain about your fowl *[sic]* language. *[You saying we've got a thing for chickens? Perv.]* I am only 12 and I don't like to read bad language. Think about the younger kids that read this – they might start saying it in front of their parents, and then be grounded. Which'd be a bummer.

Sammy Ross

P.S. Don't print this and I'll kill you all!

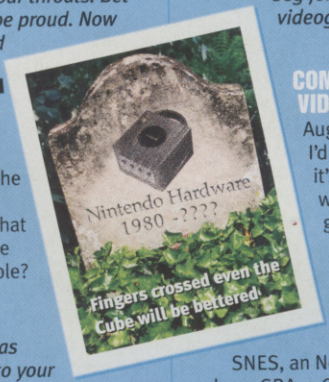
Ri-ight. So we're not allowed to use naughty words but it's cool for you to pop round and slice our throats. Bet your parents would be proud. Now CENSORED *off,* CENSORED *and never darken our door again.* CENSORED

GAME OVER?

The other day I saw the most heart-stopping news ever. Is it true that the GameCube will be Nintendo's last console? Please say no.

Pablo Grattoni

"No." Blimey, that was easy. But in answer to your question: well, yes and *no. It all stems from quotes from Nintendo's president Satoru Iwata and other Ninty big-wigs, in which they state that Nintendo's future lies in the games, and that GameCube could be Nintendo's last attempt at hardware. Nothing's definite, though, and CVG reckons there's a good chance they'll come along with something even more special than Cube in the future.*

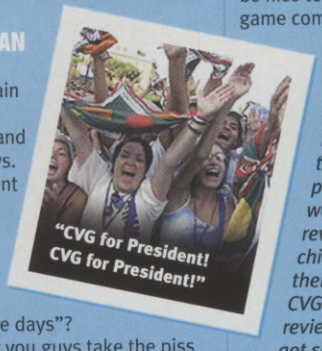


GIVE THIS MAN A HAND

People complain far too much about games and CVG these days. What's the point of people saying, "your mag is too childish", or "games are too short these days"? It's no wonder you guys take the piss out of them, they deserve all they get. Personally I think you do the best job you can on the mag and computer games are better than they have ever been. Anyway, CVG is brilliant, Nintendo rules, keep it up. Nuff said.

Jamie McDaid

We couldn't have said it better, Jamie. As far as we're concerned, we've never had it so good – there are four class consoles doing the rounds (if you include GBA), and they're all more than affordable. And then there are the games – with stuff like Mario Sunshine, TimeSplitters 2 and WWE SmackDown: Shut Your Mouth already at the top of your wish list, and Zelda, Pro Evo Soccer 2 and Tomb Raider just around the corner, surely you couldn't beg for a better time in videogames?



COMPUTER & VIDEO... GIRLS?

August was the first time I'd bought your mag and it's pretty good, but why are there no girlies on the team?

I'm 43 (and proud of it) but my mind and soul are only 17! I love my consoles – I've got a SNES, an N64, PlayStation One and 2, a GBA, a GameCube and an Xbox. I just love Zelda, MediEvil, Tomb Raider, Final Fantasy and Oddworld games, and I'm also very to partial to anything Star Wars.

As a girlie we like our games a bit more fun, with puzzles and mysteries – that's why I love the games I do. So any plans for a few new members on your team? I also reckon we judge games in a different way, so it would be nice to see what a girl would rate a game compared to a guy. What do you think? Gotta go, got games to play.

Rose Meadows

Waddaya mean, no girls? Last time we checked (and trust us, we check as often as possible) Jenny and Georgie were girls, and star CVG reviewer Maura lacks the dead chicken bits us blokes have. So there's plenty of female talent in CVG's offices. As for girls reviewing games, maybe you've got something: Mike thought TimeSplitters 2 was: "a heavyweight blaster that stomped into town and crushed all other PS2 shooters flat under its amazingly chunky ass", while Jenny thought, "some of the costumes were pretty". So what do you think, readers? Should we start a girls' corner?

HUNTER'S HOT TOPICS

Don't know what to write in about? Try these subjects for size!

Paul: Would you trade in your existing Game Boy Advance for a backlit model if one was to be released next year?

Alex: If you had to be stuck in an elevator with one of the CVG team, who would it be and why? What would you want to talk with them about?

Georgie: If you could only have ONE of the following, which would you choose and why: TV, music, games?

Jaime: Would you pay to download videogames on line? Or do you prefer to physically go out to the shops and buy a game, and to have the actual box sitting in your collection?

Lee: With seven GTA Vice City soundtracks going on sale, would you buy CDs of original game music?

Jenny: If you could have any videogame character as your best mate, who would you choose and why?

Mike: What kind of Mario adaptation would you most like to see next? Maybe a roller derby dancing mat game, or a MGS-style stealth adventure, where Mario infiltrates Microsoft's headquarters and has to assassinate Bill Gates? Or do you have a better idea?

CVG'S JOKE OF THE MONTH

Each month we'll give you the first bit of a joke. All you have to do is email us with the punchline. Funniest answer gets printed in the mag, along with your mugshot if you send a pic in to the usual address.

Q: How many Xbox owners does it take to swap a Scart lead?

IT'S A MUG'S GAME

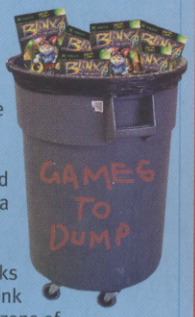
I have an idea for a competition. Readers send in photos of the side and front of their head, and the winner becomes a character in a game currently being made. Sounds like a winner to me! What d'ya reckon?

Chris Nash

Nice idea, Chris. If you guys send in a mugshot of yourself, we'll do our best to get your ugly boat races in games. In the meantime, check out the cameos Team CVG made in Res Evil!

Oh. They don't look much different...

BLINX AND YOU'LL MISS IT

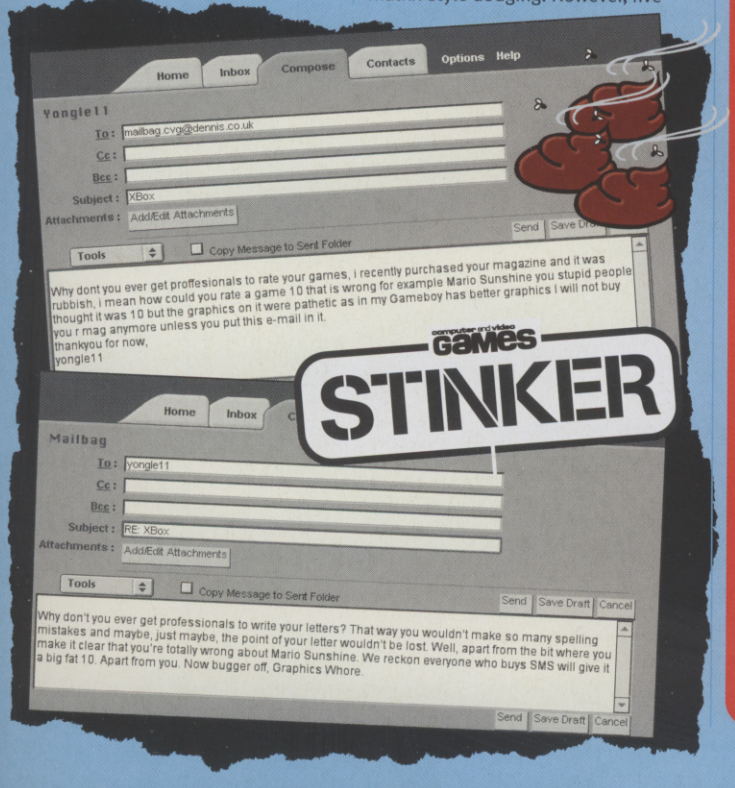


I see in the August Issue you had a preview of Blinx The Timesweeper. You praise its ability to manipulate time and how it is sure to be a hit – I don't doubt this for a moment. However, three weeks after its release I think there's gonna be dozens of copies in the second-hand bins.

I believe this will be the case because of the example set by Max Payne. When it first came out, everyone was blown away by Bullet-Time and Matrix-style dodging. However, five days later, after completing it several times, it seemed to get shelved along with a lot of other games, never to be played again.

Vince Cooney

True, Vince, many games these days rely on one-off tricks, and Max Payne's a prime example. But we reckon Blinx will be different, because manipulating time is more than just a neat visual effect – it's integral to the game. You'll need to 'record' time and replay the scene to complete puzzles, assisting your ghost to progress further. You can even pause time to freeze enemies, allowing Blinx to sneak round the back and take a pop. But best of all, you can have a laugh because, quite simply, Blinx is a quality platformer, packed with puzzles. Sounds good to us.



"HELP ME, OH WIZARD"

Meet the Wizard. Our grizzled guru can tell you which next-gen console would suit you best, based on your personal tastes. We accept no responsibility if he's wrong, or stupid or just a bit smelly...*

Help me, Oh gracious and most powerful wizard. Or should I say 'Gandalf'! I have a crap PC. My favourite games are Max Payne, Luigi's Mansion and Half-Life. My fave films are The Great Escape, The Matrix and Spider-Man. Thank you, most powerful one (Gandalf).

Mcauleys

Gandalf? I blimmin' wish. At least then I'd be doing proper wizardy things, like casting fireballs and turning people into toads, rather than playing Mystic Meg for you lot. Anyway, the answer's simple: a PS2. Don't ask me why, I just know.

Help Me, Oh Wizard! I own a GameCube, my fave games are Mario, Donkey Kong and Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone, and my favourite films are Bean, Scary Movie and Scooby-Doo.

Shigeru Miyamoto

If you're Miyamoto, I'm stuffin' Gandalf. Um, yes... Look, you're missing the point, son. I tell you which next-gen console to buy based on your personal tastes. You already own a next-gen console, so just cease this endless banter. Curse it – get a PS3 when it comes out.

I own an Xbox already and want to get another console but I can't choose between PS2 and GameCube. My fave games are Halo, Resident Evil Nemesis and Tomb Raider 2. Fave movies are Rat Race, True Lies and Saving Private Ryan.

Ross McGeown

Oh, come on, surely you can tease my immense mind powers with a problem more challenging than that? No? PlayStation 2 and Medal Of Honor: Frontline. This is all too easy for a sorcerer of my calibre...

PS1 and N64. Final Fantasy VII, WWF SmackDown 2, Zelda: Ocarina Of Time. Lord Of The Rings, Austin Powers: Goldmember, Terminator 2.

Donbenjaminio

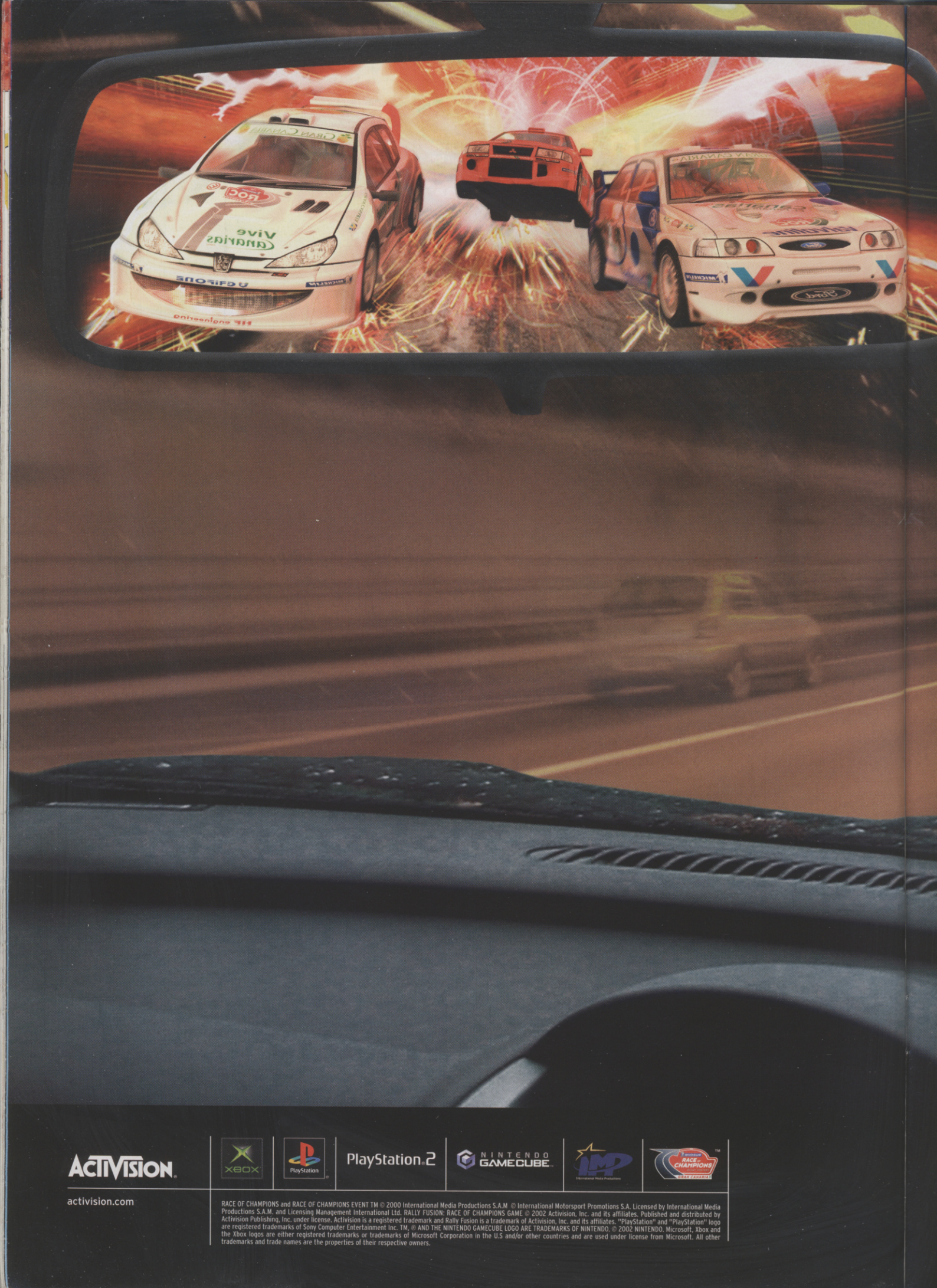
Chatty little one, aren't you. When you ask your mum for something, are you so abrupt? "Food, now." I didn't think so. Next time please greet me with respect (or shove a handful of fivers in my robe pocket) and I might help you out.

I'm emailing in the hope you can tell me which console is best for me. I currently have a Dreamcast and PS2. My three fave games ever are Virtua Tennis 2, Crazy Taxi and Grand Theft Auto III. My three fave films are Midnight Express, Leon and Road Trip. Hope this is enough info for you, Oh Wizard, and I look forward to your magical decision. Thanks a lot.

Andy Mayor

Now that, my son, is better! I can feel my mystical powers bubbling over with enthusiasm already. (Or maybe that's just last night's Bat Wing soup. Hm.) So, you like Virtua Tennis 2, Crazy Taxi and... And you already have a PS2? Don't bother, stick with what you've got! Egad, I'm a genius!

***If you require the wizard's help, send us an email marked 'Help Me, Oh Wizard' stating your current console, three favourite games and films.**



ACTIVISION

XBOX | PlayStation | PlayStation 2 | NINTENDO GAMECUBE | IMP International Media Productions | RACE OF CHAMPIONS

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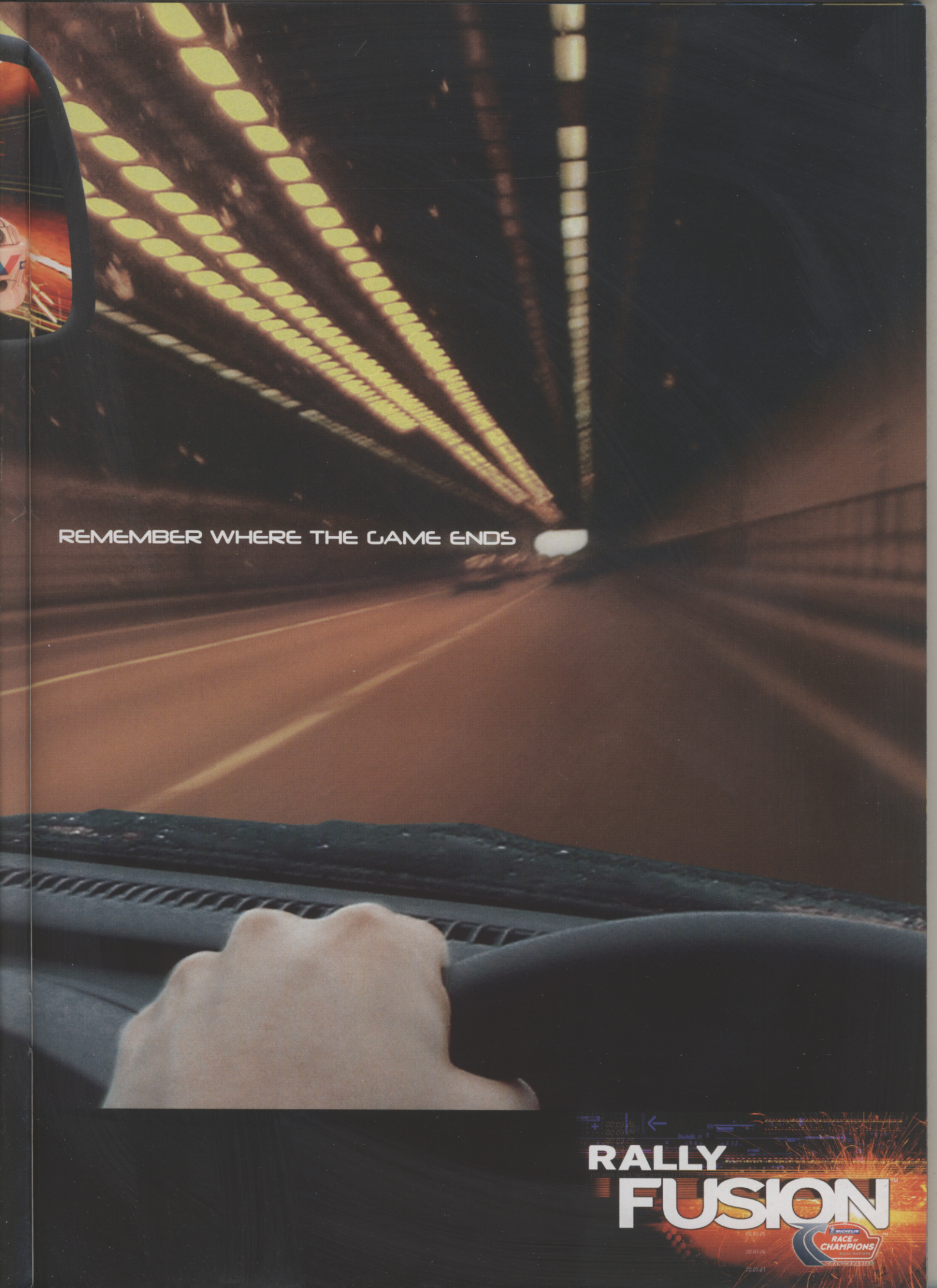
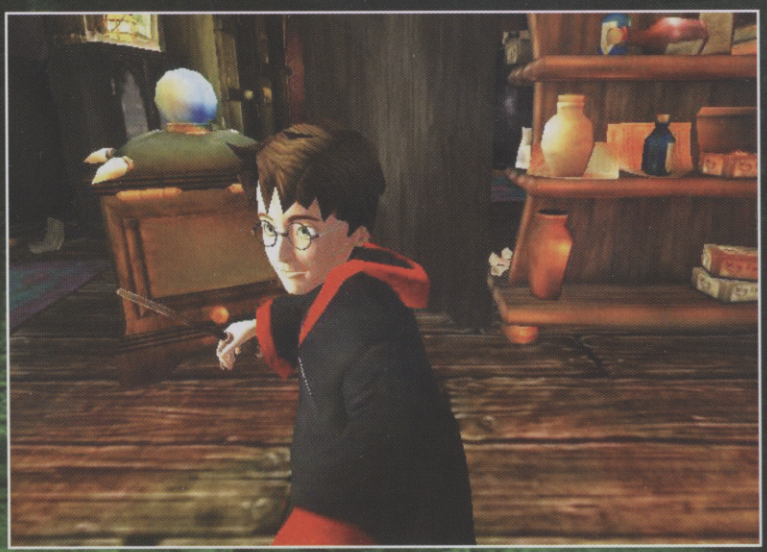

REMEMBER WHERE THE GAME ENDS
RALLY
FUSION
MICHELIN
RACE OF CHAMPIONS

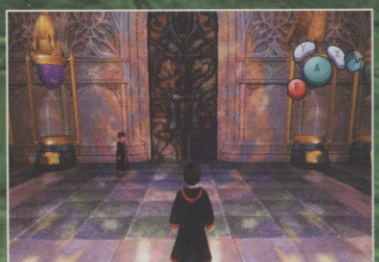
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™

Expelliarmus! Seven massive new Potter games are coming for Christmas, ready to wage an all-out assault on the pockets of gamesplayers the world over. With a unique style of adventure on almost all of the different machines, and only a limited amount of Sickles and Knuts in the bank, what you need is a magical guide to choosing the best Potter game for your system, right? Well, we've donned our invisibility cloaks and quaffed our polyjuice potions to sneak into EA's offices and let CVG readers know first how we rate Potter's Christmas games!



Potter's back on PS2! Looks great but find out more in our in-depth preview on page 33

Next-gen Potter looks beautiful, but will it turn out to have the gameplay to match?

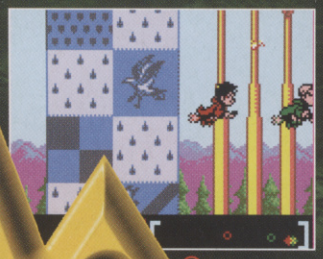


Stained-glass reflections make for an impromptu disco-dancing game. Possibly

REVIEW GAME BOY COLOR

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-6
COST: £24.99
PUBLISHER: EA
OUT: NOV. 15
DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
URL: WWW.EAGAMES.COM



Play Quidditch for the first time on GBC

REVIEW GAME BOY ADVANCE

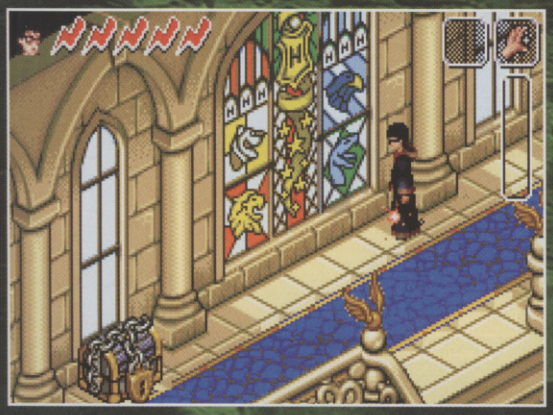
GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: EA
OUT: NOV. 15
DEVELOPER: EUROCOM
URL: WWW.EAGAMES.COM

The hope was that this year's GBA Potter would feature the same kind of Pokemon-influenced gameplay and role-playing excellence that makes the GBC Potter games so much fun. Instead, you get a strange hybrid of exploration and platforming that's rather underwhelming and feels something of a wasted opportunity. Oh.

For starters, the isometric viewpoint is problematic for navigating falling platforms and you can't shoot and run at the same time. And, out of all the Chamber Of Secrets games, the Game Boy Advance version feels like it has the least to do with Harry Potter, an obvious minus point. The way you flick switches to find treasure chests and the remedial puzzles seem to have more in common with dodgy old 8-bit games than with the splendour of JK Rowling's fictional world.

What secrets will Harry find while roaming Hogwarts' halls?

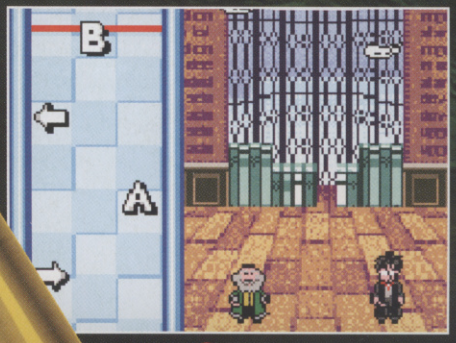


The Fat Lady gazes down enviously as Harry tries to woo Hermione with his best chat-up lines

This is what being a trainee wizard should be all about! Slip into Harry's robe and live the story of the Chamber Of Secrets.

The GBC title is the most faithful videogame version of the book. Learn spells and combo attacks to use in turn-based battles, enlist the help of Ron and Hermione and use their special abilities, like an attack by Ron's pet Scabbers.

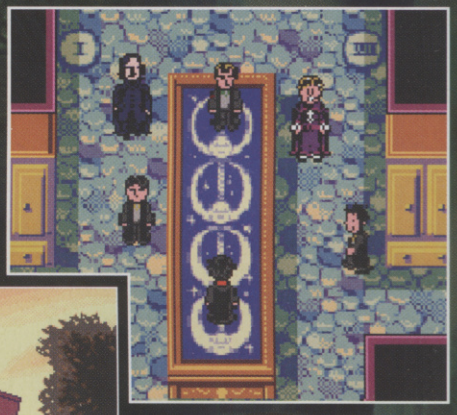
Gilderoy wrote the book on 'ponce' – we hate him



Bash the buttons to learn the second-year spells

Wizard duel challenges appear in all the games

The action is identical to last year's top-down role-player, but a selection of excellent mini-games adds variety. Plus, the GBC gameplay was the strongest of last year's games so more of the same isn't much of a problem. There are card combos to learn, secret cards to find and fierce battles. And the visuals capture the Potter feel perfectly.



Even though it's on GBC, the Burrow looks just like it does in the movie!

Harry succumbs to the spiders in the forest

CVG RECKONS

GBC Potter is a bit like the books: lots of what you're used to – in fact, pretty much the same as before – but just as much fun.
Lee

8

GOOD VS BAD

+ Entertaining quest
+ Loads of spells to master
+ Fun set of mini-games
- The same as before
- Not all gamers actually enjoy turn-based fights

CVG RECKONS

This GBA effort is the least entertaining of this year's Potter games. It's still playable, but all in all a bit of a let-down.
Lee

6

GOOD VS BAD

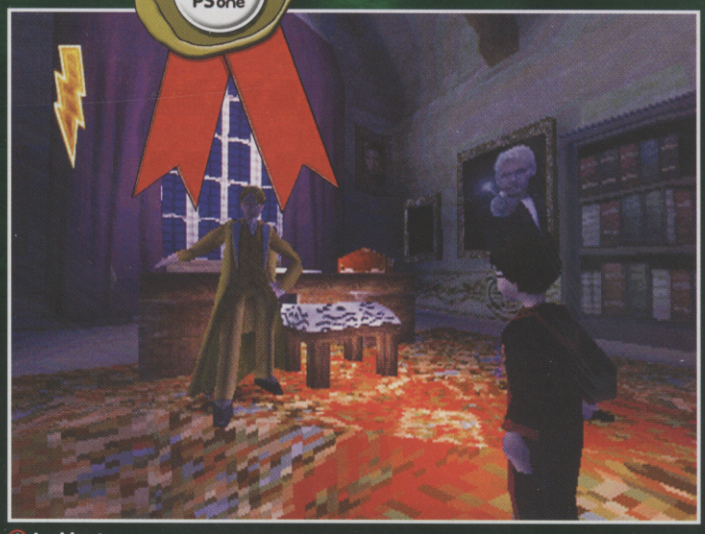
+ Nice big graphics
+ GameCube connectivity
+ Good-sized game
- Wandering can be dull
- Puzzles are random
- Not sufficiently 'Potter'

REVIEW
PSone

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: EA
OUT: NOV. 15
DEVELOPER: ARGONAUT
URL: WWW.EAGAMES.COM

Has Voldemort been using his Dark Arts down at the EA offices? We reckon some sinister magic-making must have gone on to fit everything in the Chamber Of Secrets onto puny little PSone. Potter's return sees new mysteries to unravel, new spells to learn, a few new enemies to wallop and a bunch of new mini-games to enjoy.



Lockhart demonstrates his teapot impression but our Harry is unimpressed

The ghostly Deathday Party is brilliantly recreated on PSone

EASY WEASLEY

The action is split into very small segments for maximum ease of play. In fact, there's an auto-save every few minutes to help propel you through. Though there's little frustrating replay of previous sections, it does mean you'll blast through the game fairly quickly. This is especially true if you played last year's effort, as the basic gameplay is identical. Still, there are probably enough surprises to keep younger players entertained.

The best of these new additions are the wizard duels. These are 'best-of-three' wand fights in which you need to pummel your rival to submission using magic attacks. The contests break up the action, get fairly tricky later on and are rock hard compared to the relative ease of dispatching the monsters marauding Hogwarts' halls.

Potter on PSone is competent and polished but, despite the different story and handful of new features, feels more like an update than a true sequel.

FLYING FORDS!

While it looks the ropiest of all the versions, Potter on PSone does has a few exclusive treats to make it worthy of your coin. Levels like the flying car-chase through tunnels and over hillsides, or the button-bashing athletics of the gnome-tossing game.

It's almost as if EA has put just enough different things in each game to make you want to buy them all...

The idea is to use the speed boost tokens to keep ahead of the speeding train behind you

Aragog is hungry for the the gamey tang of wizard flesh

Line-up for class like real school. Wake us at the good bits

The Anglia takes a battering from the Whomping Willow with Ron stuck inside

Stun the goblins and then swing them about the place for maximum bonus beans

CVG RECKONS

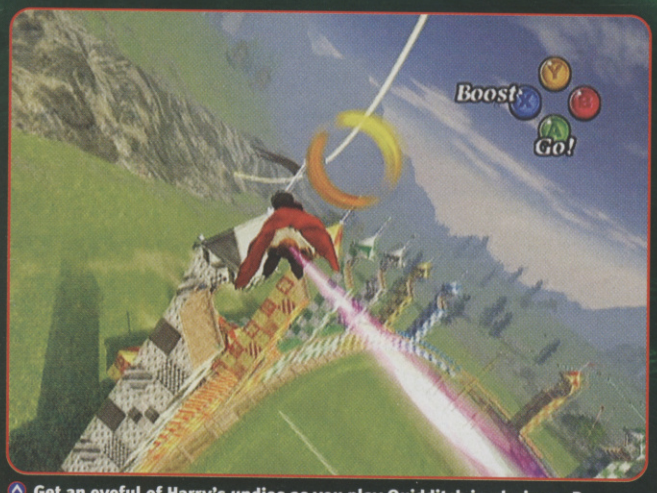
Ticks all the boxes without excelling in any one department. It's good, but maybe one to keep for younger siblings.
Lee

7

GOOD VS BAD

+ Strongly plot-driven play
+ Loads to do throughout
+ Nice presentation
- Some tasks a bit boring
- Over relatively quickly

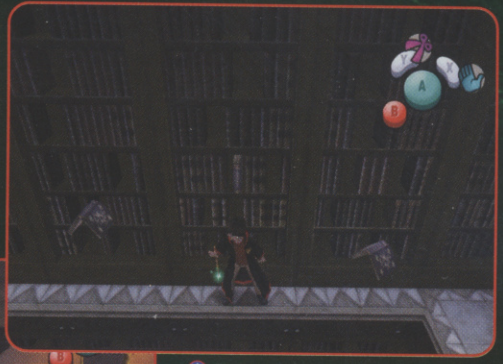
FORMAT: **PS2/GC/XBOX** OUT: **NOVEMBER 15** DEVELOPER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS, EUROCOM** PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**



Get an eyeful of Harry's undies as you play Quidditch in glorious 3D

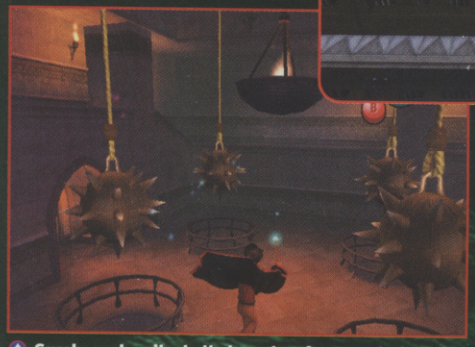
Ghostly beauties mock the size of Harry's wand in the castle

The Boy Scout movement could use the first couple of hours of the next-gen Harry Potter games to identify suitable youths for recruitment. In fact, you have to perform so many do-gooding errands that you might want to chuck it in and go break a window to ease your frustration instead.



Press against walls to hug them

When sneaking, the camera switches to a top-down view



Surely such spiky balls breach safety regulations?

The next-gen Potter games, while looking delicious, stick very closely to the plot of the second Potter novel. This means that you'll spend arguably too much time messing around in the Burrow and running errands for the dim-witted Weasleys in Diagon Alley before getting to the good stuff later on at Hogwarts. But such is the nature of the beast with a Potter game, and we suppose that being obsessively faithful to the licence is better than being so wide of the mark you end up with a cartoon racing game called Super Potter Kart. Shudder.

Fix the Weasley's charmed household items with magic power

X APPEAL

As you learn new spells and gather items, you can start assigning them to the various buttons on the pad in the inventory screen. You should note that the X button remains the action button, though, and is context-sensitive depending on the situation in which Harry finds himself.

Press X to sneak about like Snake at night-time

Or use the same button to chat with Fred and George

SECOND YEAR, SEXIER SPELLS

Next-gen Potter should have a lot more depth than the PC and PSone games and will be more of an action adventure than a simple platform game. After the initial training and errand-running nonsense you will arrive at Hogwarts, where you'll get to learn cool new second-year spells.

WIZARD DUELLING!

Harry can lock on to a target when it is in range by pressing the right shoulder button. He will then strafe and shimmy around the target, giving you the chance to build up your attacks before you send Voldemort's minions back to the underworld.

This ability comes in especially handy when duelling with fellow wizards at Hogwarts – it could land you big bonuses.

Hold down your spell button to charge the attack

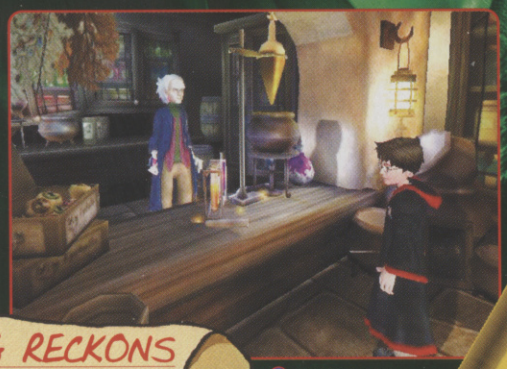
Target inanimate objects to charm them and open secret doors

Duelling with Draco! Frazzle his girlie blond locks with your handy Incendio spell

The action is split between lessons in school time during the day, and 'proper' adventuring at night to solve the mysteries of the Chamber Of Secrets.

Aside from a slightly faster Quidditch game, we suspect the school missions will be a bit dull. Sneaking around at night is where most thrills will come from, with sections like exploring the Forbidden Forest looking for Aragog making for a spookier experience than you'd expect.

Collect all of the Famous Witches and Wizard cards for major bragging rights



The Herbology classes are full of triffids

Don't waste cash on stink pellets – get supplies instead

FORMAT: **PC** OUT: **NOVEMBER 15**
DEVELOPER: **KNOW WONDER** PUBLISHER: **EA**

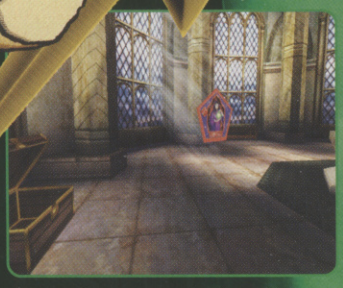
Potter on PC is made for everyone from ages six to 60. Fine for ordinary schmoes and idiot relatives who only play games when there's nothing good on TV, but what about players who've busted games like Devil May Cry, straddled Final Fantasy X's massive girth and unlocked and beaten Invisible Enemy mode on GameCube Resi? Hmm.

Despite efforts to create multiple routes through the game and add loads of replay value, PC Potter seems set to be the most lightweight version. Spells are automatically selected for you and you can even turn on the auto-jump feature for extra help leaping from ledge to ledge.

It should be authentic with better graphics than before, but we've yet to see much depth to the action and puzzles are repeated throughout. Maybe one for the kids and your granny but not you.

Harry gets in a flap as Peeves goes on the rampage

Get the cards for points



The levels are much more populated than before and feel more school-like

CVG RECKONS

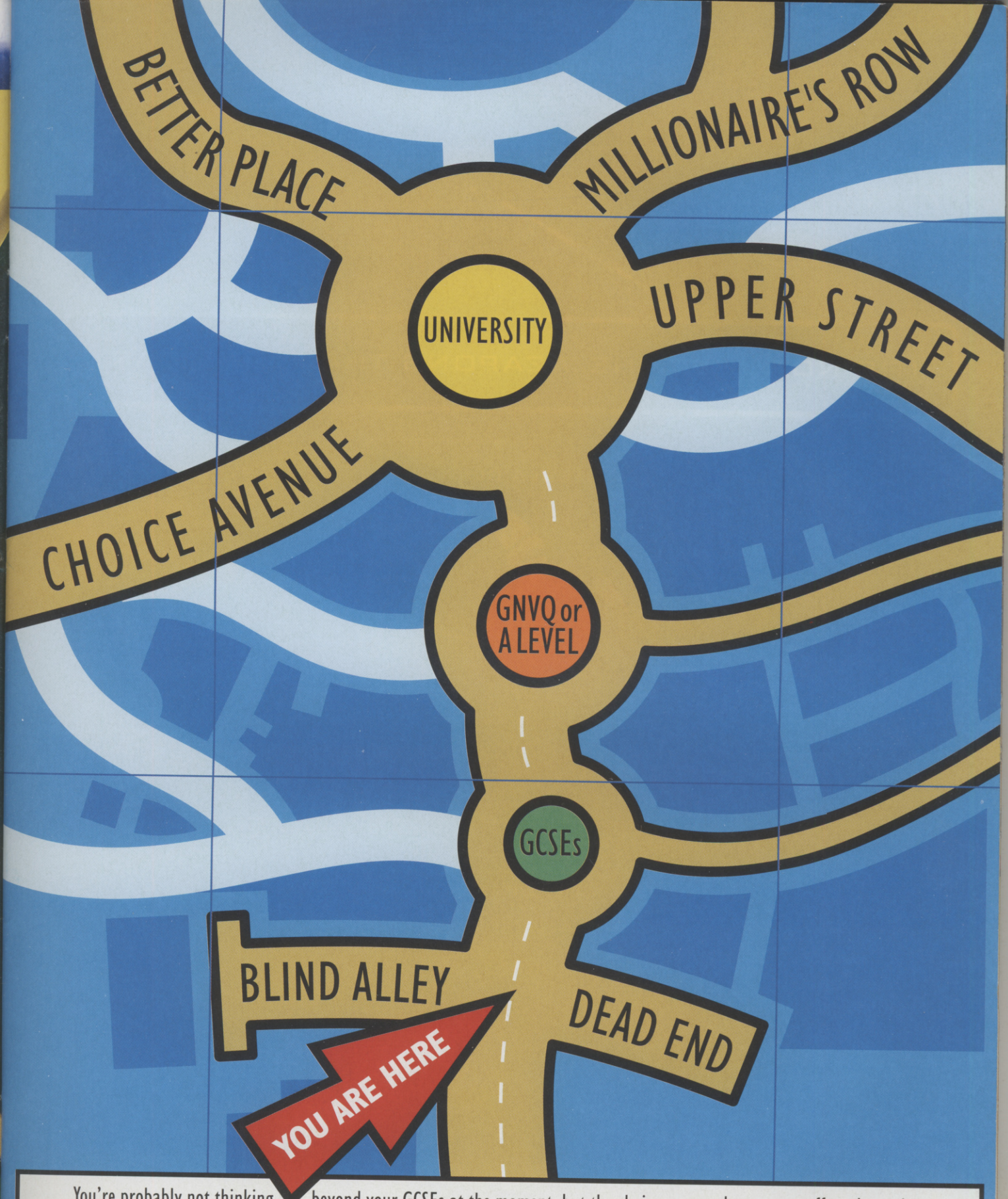
The games look gorgeous but will there be enough action and challenges to keep gamers as well as fans happy? **Lee**

ANTICIPATION RATING:

CVG RECKONS

One of the prettiest platform games on PC? Maybe so, but we're sure it'll also be one of the system's simplest. **Lee**

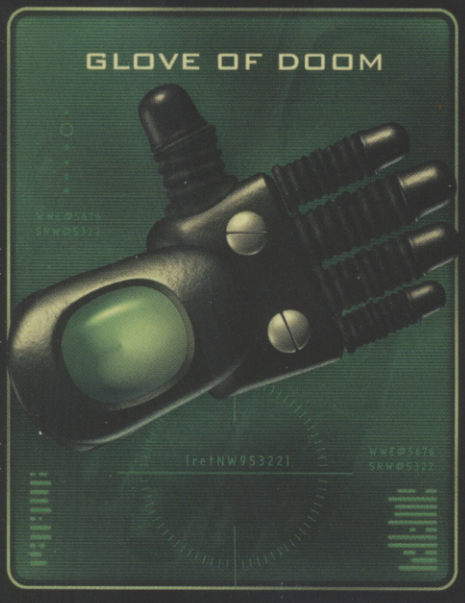
ANTICIPATION RATING:

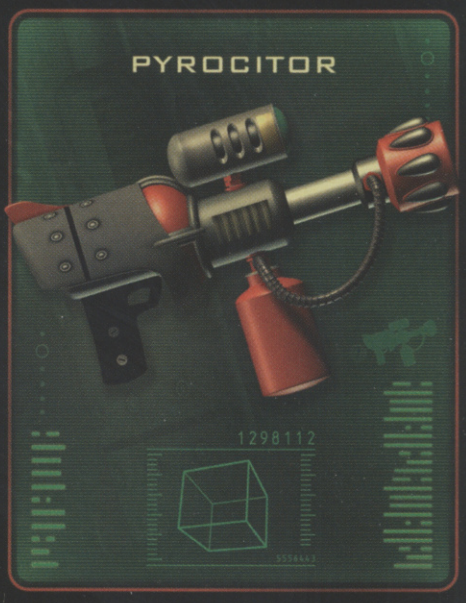


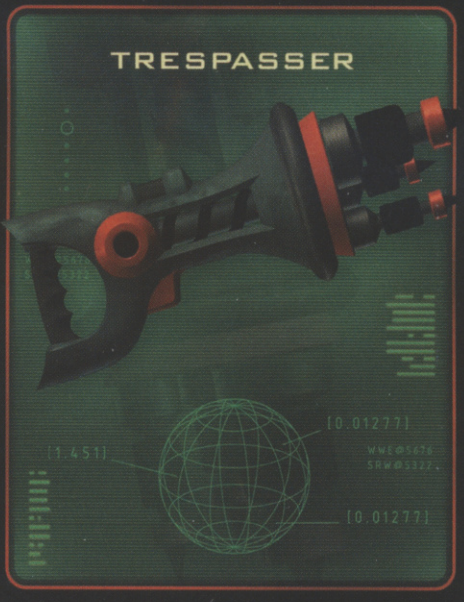
You're probably not thinking beyond your GCSEs at the moment, but the choices you make now can affect the paths you take later on. There are loads of ways to get on in life but, wherever you want to be, going to college or university will help you get there. For a free magazine that will tell you how to get to uni, what goes on there and how it will help you get a great job, call **0800 587 8500** or visit **www.aimhigher.gov.uk**

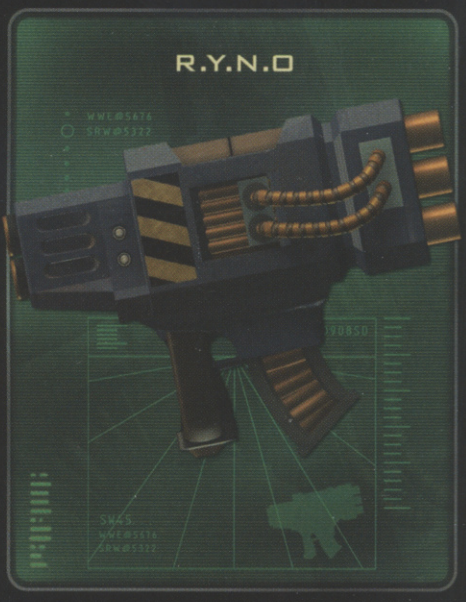
Aimhigher™ College or uni...don't leave the future to chance.

IT'S NOT JUST THE WEAPONS THAT ARE SCARY









Introducing Ratchet & Clank, a deadly duo sent to save the universe from total destruction. Help them blast their way through an epic array of environments armed with the biggest weapons arsenal in the galaxy. Heaven forbid.

INSOMNIAC GAMES

uk.playstation.com
www.ratchetandclankgadgets.com

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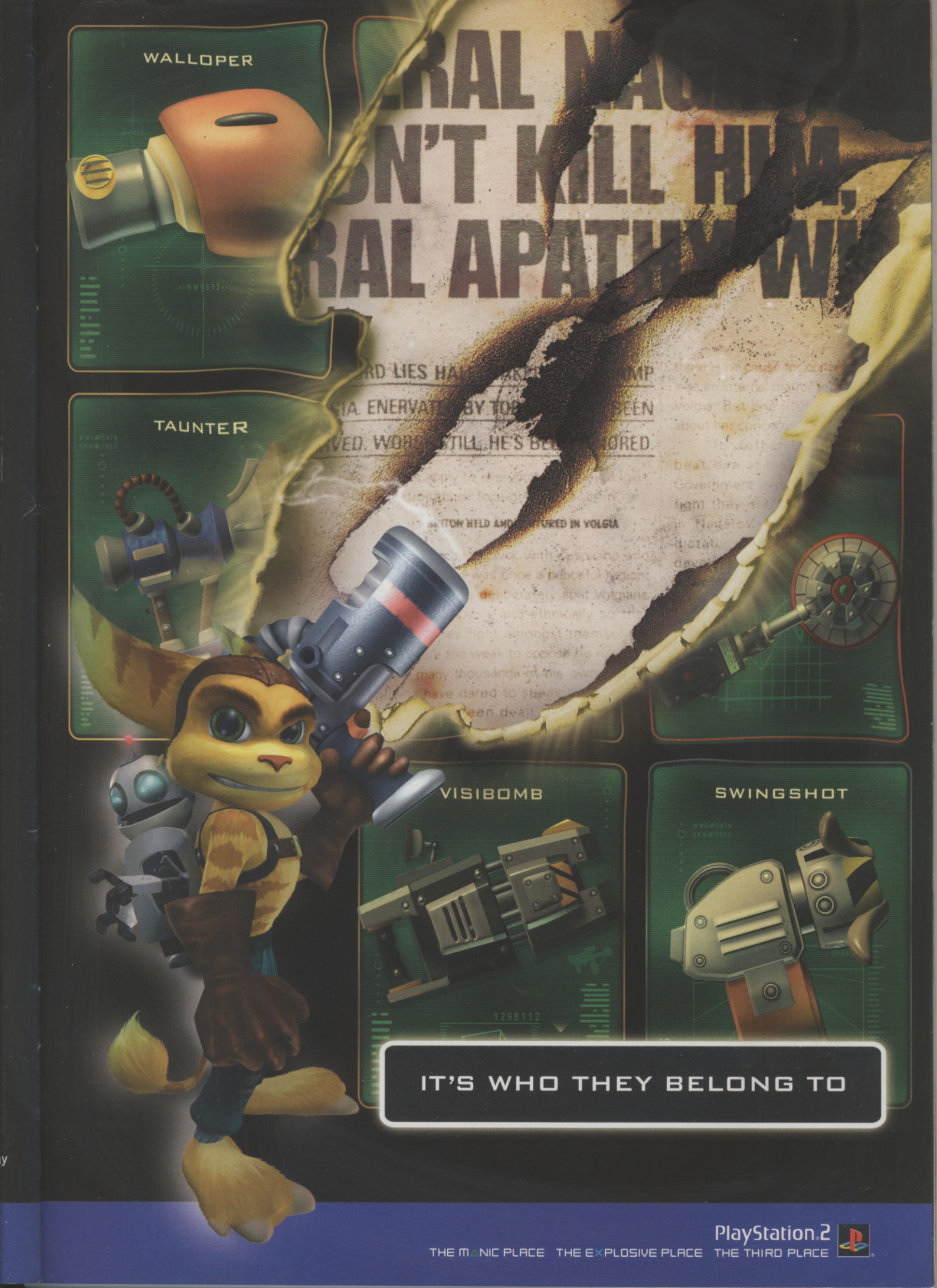
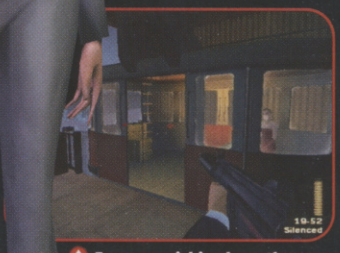

WALLOPER
TAUNTER
VISIBOMB
SWINGSHOT
IT'S WHO THEY BELONG TO
PlayStation.2
THE MANIC PLACE
THE EXPLOSIVE PLACE
THE THIRD PLACE

PREVIEWS

JAMES BOND 007 NightFire™

In true James Bond fashion, beauties like this are scattered throughout the game

Snow scooters are so cool: we want one NOW!



Fancy a quickie above the Alps? There's not much time with a gang of terrorists chasing you

The laser watch makes a welcome return. Look at the pretty colours

FORMAT: **PS2/GC/XBOX/PC** OUT: **NOVEMBER** DEVELOPER: **EUROCOM/GEARBOX** PUBLISHER: **EA**

Enemies will run away, team up and do all the things well AI-ed enemies should

Pierce Brosnan is now the ripe old age of 49. That's the age when everything begins to go south. Your skin starts to resemble last week's custard, you sag so much that you can tuck your nipples into your beltloops, and you need to get up three times a night to go to the toilet.

Quite how he would manage on a covert nocturnal castle raid is beyond us. Thankfully, though, he doesn't seem to have too many problems in the new James Bond game.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Despite his advancing years, not only is the suave Mr Brosnan as spritely as ever – jumping, running and doing all the other things a good double agent should – he's also been given an electronic facelift. Gone are the 'seven visible signs of ageing', but maybe that's because jowl animation would take too many polygons.

What with all the excitement at the start of this new instalment, it may be *you* who ages prematurely. As soon as the game loads up – even before the main menu has appeared – you are thrown right into the thick of the action: it's just before midnight on a chilly New Year's Eve and sexy French undercover agent Dominique Paradis

SHIMMY SHIMMY YA

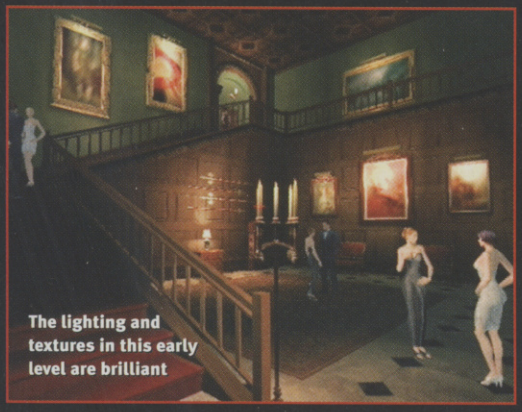
The not-so-secret secret agent now has loads of abilities to help him fulfil his objectives. Along with the vehicle-based missions, this should stop it from becoming a straight-up frag-fest and add some extra elements to the gameplay, which is already looking wicked.

The rope crossing looks cool. Let's hope it's used throughout the game

James can use his mobile to grapple onto hooks on far away and high ledges

Ziplining seems popular. Make sure you don't crease the suit, though

There she blows! The start of the Alpine Escape level is perfect for testing out your gun turret

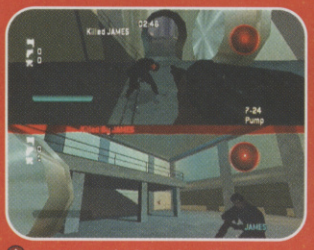


The lighting and textures in this early level are brilliant

MULTIPLAYER MURDER

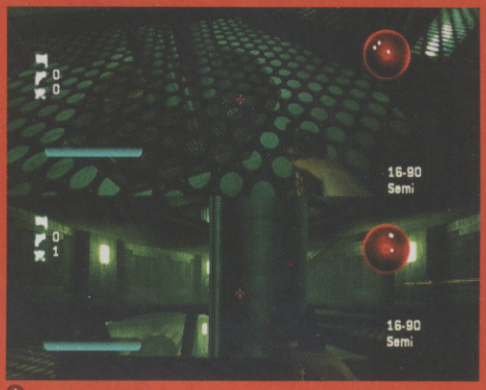
The multiplayer mode will need to try hard to beat the standards set by TimeSplitters 2, but in the early version there were loads of options to fiddle with and arenas to try out. It also plays very smoothly, especially on the Xbox game.

Use the cable cars to get around. But watch out – it's easy to fall out



Fort Knox is full of buffed-up steel and even more buffed-up bots, if you decide to put them in

Capture the flag is a favourite. It's not totally unlike paintballing, only with much crazier weapons



It's a big advantage if you have a dark-clothed ninja on some of the more shadowy levels

is being pursued by evil terrorists. Well, 007 is hardly going to stand back and watch, is he?

What ensues is essentially a cutscene: there's Bond at a helicopter door, the sniper rifle he's holding automatically zooming in on the pursuers' wheels, but you deciding when to shoot.

The chase continues through the streets of Paris, sweeping across bridges and through a building site as cars crash and explode, but all the time you are gaining more and more control over our hero's movements.

SAVE THE DAY

Eventually, you save Dominique and drop into your DB7, gaining full control over the car and driving through the shopping parades and al fresco restaurants to try to diffuse a bomb headed for the Eiffel Tower.

This is the first time this clever technique of dropping you right in the action has been used, and it works brilliantly, getting you right in the mood for the game.

It also demonstrates the quality of presentation evident throughout the three-level demo we played. The designers have captured the feel of the films perfectly, with opening titles featuring catsuited women prancing around with guns and redheads morphing into sweeping flames. Even the pause menu features those silhouetted lovelies that you really wish hadn't been silhouetted.

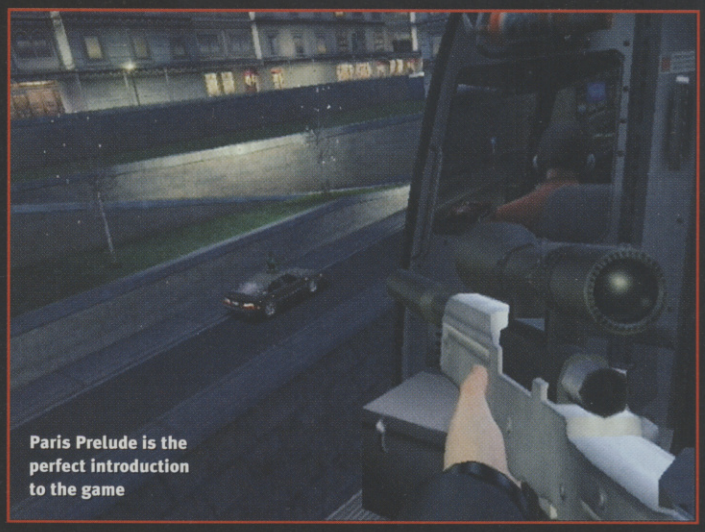
DRIVE ME WILD

Another level sees you trying to gatecrash a party held by a suspected terrorist. After you parachute in, you must take out the castle's outer guards before you decide which way to enter. Go in by the front door and you can expect fierce firefights, with enemies using their impressive AI to duck behind walls and avoid getting killed. But shimmy around the castle walls and you'll manage to avoid most of the guards.

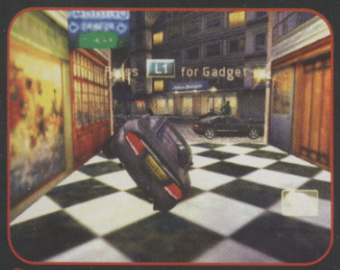
You'll also get to test some of Bond's new abilities, like grappling onto hooks and rope-crossing. And although the bulk of the gameplay will be classic first-person shooter fare, the game promises lots of extras, such as vehicle-based missions.

In Alpine Escape, the level following the castle, you act as gunner on a snow-scooter while another one of your bits on the side, agent Zoe Nightshade, drives. The different segments of the stage (trying to get the scooter started, sliding down mountain slopes, avoiding a helicopter) are punctuated by mini cutscenes and so far, instead of intruding, they add to the experience.

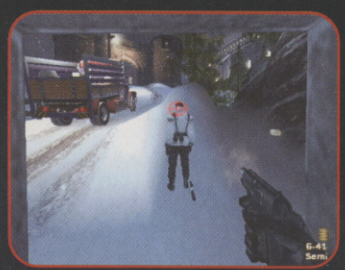
The levels we played notched the tension level right up, but still managed to keep that tongue-in-cheek sense of humour we all love about Bond. If the rest of the game can keep up, this could become one of the best first-person shooters around.



Paris Prelude is the perfect introduction to the game



Probably not as cool as driving a real Aston Martin, but this level's still great



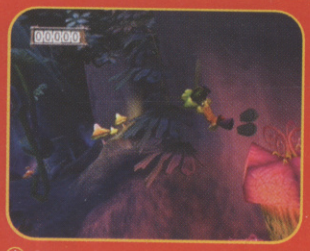
He really hasn't a clue about what's about to hit him, has he?

CVG RECKONS

From the fancy new moves to the tense first-person shoot 'em up action, this game is looking to prove beyond all doubt that Bond is back! Jimmy

BARKING MAD

No platform game is complete without a bunch of mini-games to spice up the action, but Rayman's challenges surely take the insanity-laced biscuit. There's psychedelic racing on what look like neon strip lights, zipline-style swinging through murky forests and flying gunships through the insides of a huge machine just for starters. It's all mad.



A game hero without limbs, so how about a rope slide without the rope?

Seventies lounge decor or post-modern ironic chic? Oh, who cares

Flying tonight with Globox in the cockpit, cramping your style

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

FORMAT: **PS2/XBOX/GC** OUT: **MARCH 2003** DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

Witness the horror of when good fairies go bad. The golden shiny Lums – a bunch of strange spirit beings familiar to every Rayman fan *[what, all six of them? Ed]* – are being turned evil. What's more, they're using their brand new badness to create shotgun-toting, pointy-hat-wearing fiends called Hoodlums. That'll be time for more nonsensical, gorgeous 3D platforming with the limbless hero, then.

When you're not flying in the ship you get to shoot goons from the skies

Possibly inspired by Ubi's forthcoming XIII, cartoon-style exclamations appear

Globox spends his nights cruising red light districts for nubile young men

MR MUSCLE

Rayman's latest adventure takes everything that's gone into previous games and applies a giant family-sized can of polish to it. The graphics are among the best on the system, the presentation slicker than Triple H's hair and even Rayman himself is loaded with new moves to put an end to the Hoodlums' boomstickery.

Picking up special canisters transforms Rayman's standard punch into something rather heftier. You can use the extend-o-chains to grab and swing onto hooks, the green windy fists to blow down wooden doors and the red spiked fists for extra power.

Use the rocket fists as guided missiles to take out targets in the distance

We're yet to see how the full Hoodlum Havoc hangs together, but the sections we've played hint at another top-quality outing for France's best export since strong Continental lager. So fingers crossed for March.

Rayman's helicopter hair's put to good use when negotiating floaty platforms

CVG RECKONS

A dazzling treat for the eyes, for sure, and it's likely to be a real pleasure for your fingers too, no matter what your opinion may be of little Rayman himself. Lee

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LET THE RACE BEGIN

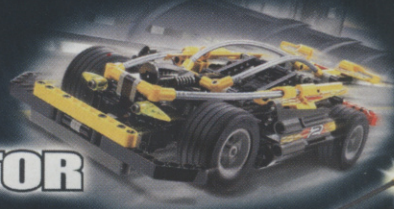
Race against your friends at the speed of lightning. Choose your racer for the race challenge - you can easily build and rebuild your racer when the race changes. All LEGO® Racers are powered by slammer, pull back or electric motors.

Duel Racers
Place the two pull back motor powered desert racers to the start gate and you know it's going to be a fair race! The two buggies can be customised to race in other environments, or combine them to make a double-engined monster machine!
Art. 4587

PULL BACK MOTOR

RC Nitro Flash
Infrared, remote controlled racer. You can easily convert the desert car to a jungle off-road buggy or rocky canyon racer. Additional off-road tyres and parts included. Three channels make it possible to race against friends.
Art. 4589

INFRARED RC REMOTE CONTROL



Street 'n' Mud Racer
A built-in electric motor powers this street racer. When it hits an obstacle, it backs up and drives off in a new direction! You can gear up the street racer to take on off-road challenges too by fitting the extra offroad tyres.
Art. 8472

MOTOR

RC Race Buggy
Radio controlled racer. The big-wheeled rocky canyon buggy with super suspension converts easily into a sleek and slender high-speed racer with low profile tyres. A real winner! Supports three radio channels. Extra tyres and parts included.
Art. 8475

RC RADIO CONTROL

PULL BACK MOTOR

Nitro Race Team
Drive your pull back motor powered off-road racer onto the trailer and transport it to the track – or switch the motor to the truck and go truck racing. You can even convert the truck and racer to a slammer-powered 6-wheeled street racer and another fantastic pull back motor powered offroad racer.
Art. 8473

LEGO RACERS

www.LEGO.com/racers

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CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **FEBRUARY** DEVELOPER: **KONAMI** PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**

Enemies will come at you with bikes, but when you're armed with your gun, they don't pose too much of a problem

WHO'S THE BOSS?

The sheer level of imagination that's gone into designing the enemies in Contra is astounding. This end-of-level boss is three monsters in one so that just when you think it's all over, you have to keep on shooting.

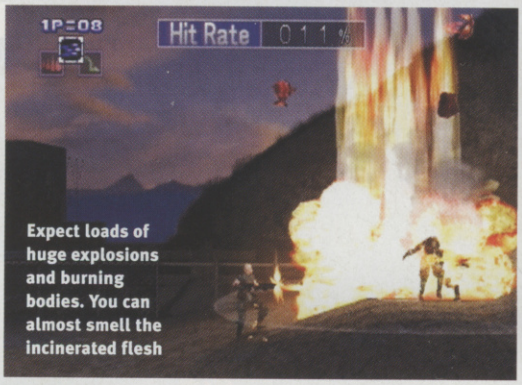
First, he starts off as this excellent helicopter-cum-robot. Or maybe Robocopter

Then he transforms into this truly hideous tortoise-creature

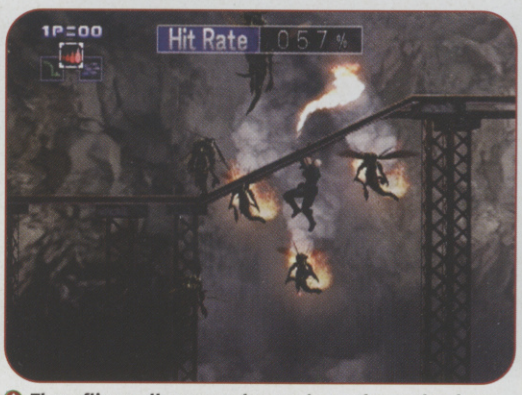
Finally, he tuns into a... er... we don't know what it is, but it's scary

Turn your flame-thrower up to Gas Mark 5 because it's frying time on PS2: the maniac 2D scrolling Contra series is waging war once more on the alien scum of the universe – this time with some tasty-looking 3D visuals.

Since the '80s, Contra's blend of frenzied shooter action, ludicrously high bodycount and thin plot (usually involving that fiend The Red Falcon) has left a smoking trail of debris across most of the major consoles. But it's been AWOL for a while, presumably sulking in the barracks after a weak PSone effort.



Expect loads of huge explosions and burning bodies. You can almost smell the incinerated flesh



These flies really annoy when you're on the monkey bars

MIX IT UP

It's not all walking horizontally along platforms. Extra elements have been added to prevent boredom from setting in. Hopefully they'll prove sufficient to keep hard-to-please gamers happy.

Our soldier can walk up walls like Spider-Man

Slide down a hill on a futuristic snowboard

A huge metallic sperm? Actually, let's not go there

Ride alongside a train as enemies try to get you

BACK FROM THE DEAD

So it comes as a relief to Contra veterans like us that the swanky new Shattered Soldier incarnation looks like a return to form for the series. Contra games were always about big guns and cool visuals, and in these areas it doesn't disappoint.

The gameplay is as frenzied as ever, but the visuals have been given a 3D facelift that's heftier than the ammunition bill in an Arnie movie – some of the boss animations and explosions are especially mint. And while the levels are often grim futuristic wastelands, they're full of depth and character. Konami has even roped in legendary comic book illustrator Ashley Wood for the character designs, and it shows.

Hidden levels, multiple endings plus a two-player co-op mode should add replay potential too. But Contra is still undeniably old-skool action, and, while its easy to pick up and play, some players may find the difficulty levels somewhat steeper than they're used to these days. Wusses.

Something tells us he's in a spot of trouble there

CVG RECKONS

Promising to be a return to form for the Contra series, Shattered Soldier looks swish but plays unashamedly old-skool. Maybe a bit niche, but we're excited. Jimmy

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CONTROL THE RACE

With the new remote controlled LEGO® Racers it's you that controls the high-speed action and daring manoeuvres through hairpin bends. Build and rebuild your remote controlled racer to suit the race challenges ahead!

INFRARED RC REMOTE CONTROL

RC Nitro Flash
Infrared, remote controlled racer.
You can easily convert the desert car to a jungle off-road buggy or rocky canyon racer. Additional off-road tyres and parts included. Three channels make it possible to race against friends.
Art. 4589.

RC RADIO CONTROL

RC Race Buggy
Radio controlled racer. The big-wheeled rocky canyon buggy with super suspension converts easily into a sleek and slender high-speed racer with low profile tyres. A real winner!
Supports three radio channels.
Extra tyres and parts included.
Art. 8475.

LEGO RACERS

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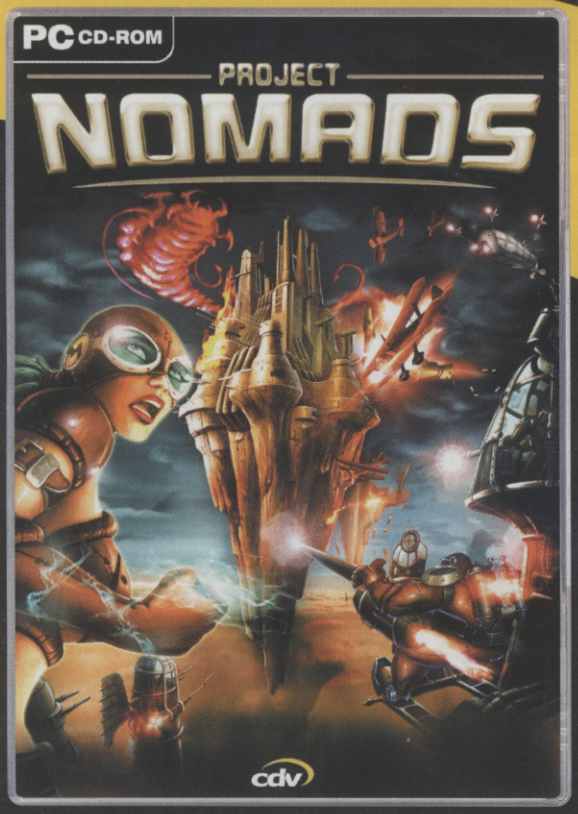
It's where the action is.



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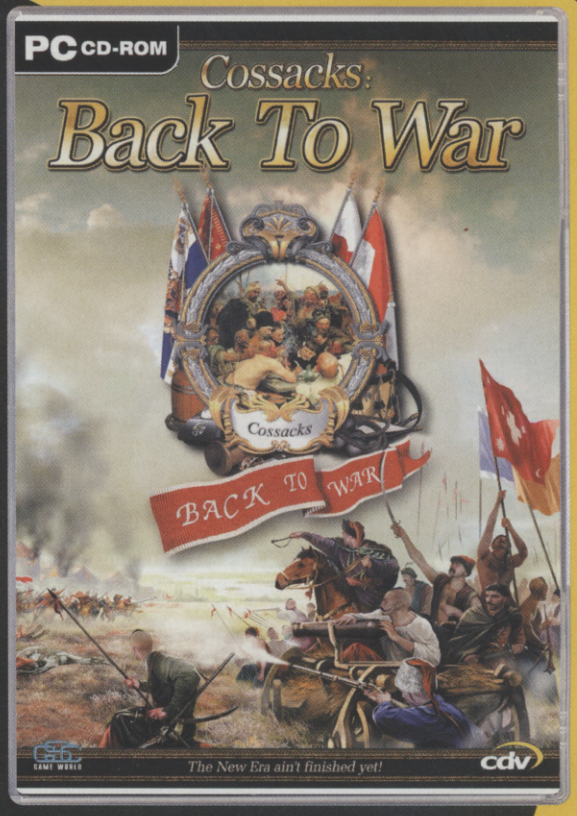

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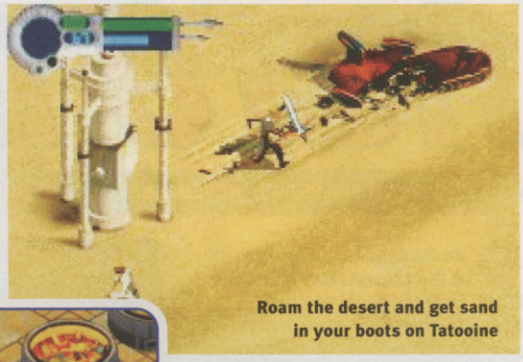
STAR WARS EPISODE II: THE NEW DROID ARMY

FORMAT: **GBA** OUT: **NOV 29** DEVELOPER: **HELIXE** PUBLISHER: **THQ**



Roam the desert and get sand in your boots on Tatooine

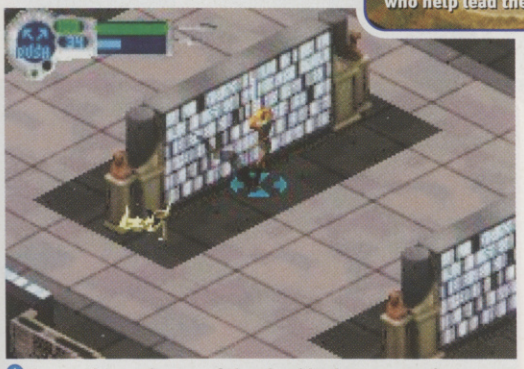
His destiny is one of the greatest in the entire Star Wars saga, so you'd think that Anakin 'Vader' Skywalker would have the sense not to wear a ponytail on the side of his head. Maybe it's all that Force addling the poor sap's mind.

You play the rats-tailed one in this new GBA adventure, which is already looking about a million times better than the handheld's comically weak Attack Of The Clones game.

Levels are also populated by friendly characters who help lead the way

Explore the lava levels on Metalorn, but try not to get toasted

Leap clean over the heads of enemies using some nifty combo moves



You need to make use of the shoulder buttons to give Anakin some extra speed with Force boost power

SWING, SABER, SWING!

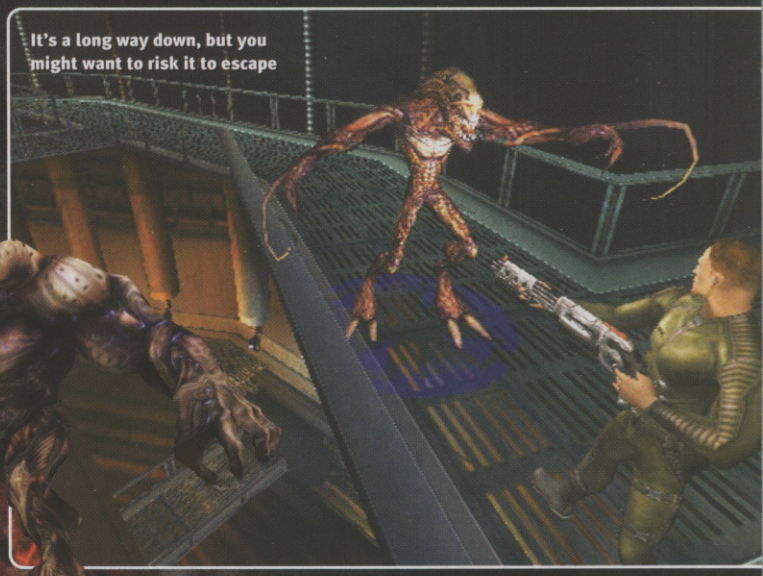
The game mixes lightsaber-swinging action with exploration, talking to locals and puzzle-solving. The enormous levels are viewed top-down and although quite plain, they manage to capture the look of the movies' locations. Extended play will determine whether there's enough variety to keep us all playing, but it's certainly looking good so far.

CVG RECKONS

With its healthy mix of classic action and involving storyline, this should prove itself as one of the year's better Star Wars games on Game Boy Advance. **Lee**

RUN LIKE HELL

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **NOV 15** DEVELOPER: **DIGITAL MAYHEM** PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN INT.**



It's a long way down, but you might want to risk it to escape

It seems like we've been talking about Run Like Hell forever. Not because we're particularly fired up in anticipation of it, but because we've been shown many preview versions, only to be told that the game has slipped, slipped and – oops – slipped some more.

CLAUSTROPHOBIA

Fortunately, the wait seems to have been worthwhile, as the game has come on a long way since we last saw it and now oozes atmosphere. From the opening prologue where you explore your ship, to the way disaster strikes and all hell breaks loose shortly after, Run Like Hell does a brilliant job of capturing the oppressive claustrophobia of deep space.

And with its sufficiently varied gameplay and plentiful grizzly shocks and surprises, this could well be a surprise Christmas hit.

Levels are a bit empty – maybe everyone has 'run like hell' and gone...

Target the bad guys, lock on and then unleash plasma rifle justice

Waiter, I believe I ordered strawberry yoghurt *without* the zombie garnish

CVG RECKONS

This should follow in the blood-soaked footsteps of The Thing and Resident Evil by mixing shocks with sound gameplay. **Lee**

AUTO MODELLISTA

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **NOVEMBER** DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM** PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**

Auto Modellista really wants to be the chicest racer round the block. From the sophisticated Italianate title, to the cel-shaded graphics, it wants you to think it's cooler than a penguin's pecker. It isn't – but it comes in a close second.

The first thing you've probably noticed (and what everyone has been talking about) is the cel-shading. No doubt it seemed like a great idea at the concept stage for a stand-out racer, but since then, Capcom must have wondered whether it was too late to follow House Of The Dead 3 and ditch the toony look once half the videogaming world had announced cel-shaded titles too.

There is no evidence of the damage to cars after you get into scrapes like this. Shame it's not like that in 'real life'

If you can, try to get into the slipstream of the car in front of you, as doing so will give you a massive boost

HOME SWEET HOME

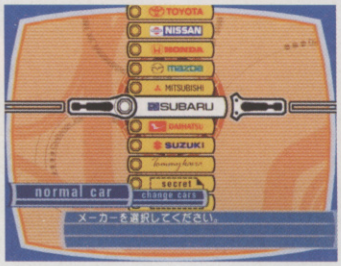
If you like spending hours faffing about making your games more 'personal', you'll love Auto Modellista's garage customisation feature.

You can customise your garage by adding shelves and toolboxes

You can even put posters on the wall to enhance that 'homely' feel

Lovely. All it needs now is a comfy leather sofa and a roaring log fire

There are some brilliant effects when you skid and crash



There's a huge variety of top-quality cars to choose from, as you can see here

Greasy-fingered mechanics will go mad for the customisation options

AUTO-GRAPHIC

It's now a bit of a gamble but Modellista's visual style is neither as flamboyant as Jet Set Radio's nor as simple as a Warner cartoon. Instead it strikes a happy medium, a kind of cartoon realism that lends it a huge amount of character.

Real car models like the Suburu Impreza race along beautiful tree-lined mountain roads and down Japanese-looking city streets covered in the sort of bumps and tyre marks you'd expect to see in real life. Even the lack of visible damage on car models (manufacturers don't want you to see their babies all busted up) that grates against the realism of other racing games seems somehow appropriate to Modellista's style.

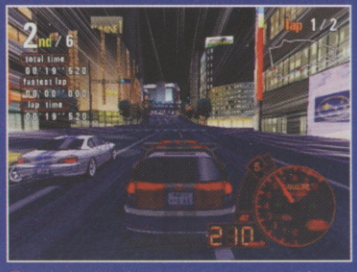
This is also a fairly realistic driving sim. Omitting acceleration and braking control with the right analog may seem strange these days, but judicious use of the X and square buttons for these purposes, and the

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Of course, the racetracks are what racing games are all about at heart. And the tracks in Auto Modellista, which are many and varied, really show off the intense quality of the visuals. Here's a few for you to check out...

Set in the mountains of Japan, this level will test your cornering to the max

The good old racetrack: it's not particularly interesting, but adds variety



This is the city level. We reckon this looks the coolest of the bunch

HEY, MR VJ

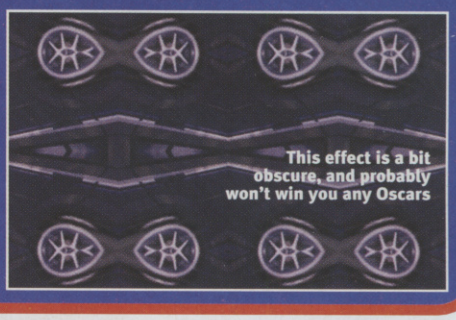
If you fancy yourself as a budding film director, you can have a go at the game's VJ theatre. If you want to spoil the purity of your best racing moments with MTV-style sound and visual effects, there's loads to tinker with. By the end you might not be as good as Spielberg, but console yourself with the possibility of gainful employment on a late-night Channel Five movie.

Try splitting the screen for kaleidoscopic effects

This is the 'negative' option, which we think looks very cool

You could just replay normally, but that would be rather dull

Or you could add a bit of blur for that artistic touch


This effect is a bit obscure, and probably won't win you any Oscars

use of slipstreams as a kind of boost, places the handling just the right side of authentic. Plus, if you want to screech around tight mountain corners while losing the minimum of speed, there's always the handbrake.

CUSTOMISE ME

If you've seen The Fast And The Furious a dozen times, you'll love this, as it's all about customisation. There are so many modifications you'd think Capcom was slipped a massive bribe by the Japanese government to get boy racers off the streets and into their living rooms.

It's less frustrating than GT3, too. Rather than having to play the same track 25 times to scrape enough money together, new upgrades become available every time you improve your place on the track. Once you've opened every mod for a given track, you can just move on to the next, with bonuses for beating records. So you need to improve your technical knowledge, as well as your racing skills, to be King Of The Track.

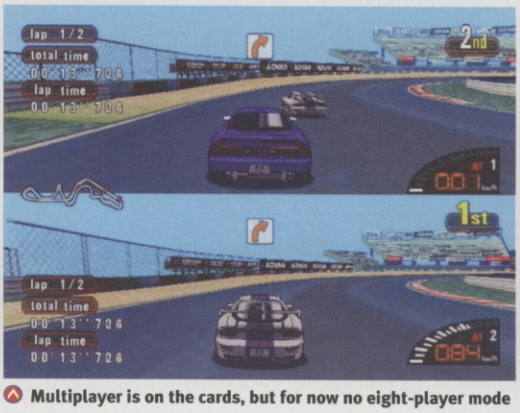
And once your car's all done up, the two-player split-screen mode lets you go head-to-head (although there's no eight-way online mode for us). Cool.

Some of the game's cars are strange, to say the least

Bet there's a good view of the racing from that Ferris wheel – beats the Thames

Making the right modifications can secure your victory

The rain effects are excellent, with drops rushing towards you as you race



Multiplayer is on the cards, but for now no eight-player mode

CHECK OUT THE WHEELS

Your local car mechanic could find himself going out of business when Auto Modellista comes out. The game provides you with a silly array of modifications you can do to your car – and souping up your set of wheels is always fun.

Pick your bog-standard Civic Type-R

Get started with some body modifications

Paintjob time – you can do parts separately

Admire your handy-work. Bootiful!

CVG RECKONS

Yes, the GT3-style focus on upgrades and cel-shading isn't so trendy now, but Modellista has a unique feel and style that could still sell well. Jimmy

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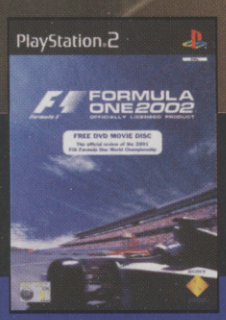

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VEXX

FORMAT: **XBOX** OUT: **NOVEMBER** DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM** PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**

This release has been assigned possibly the most appropriate name in videogames history, because the eponymous lead character really is vexed. Oh, and you will be too.

Our youthful hero is angry that his beloved grandfather has been killed by the evil 'Dark Yabu', who has enslaved the rest of this young boy's people. An adventure-cum-platform game unfolds, with you roaming large worlds in the quest for ultimate vengeance. Go, little Vexx.

The graphics and sound in the early version we saw were not looking very polished. Although this can be fixed before release, it's a worry that the level design, which is pretty lame, will stay with the game. Maybe it'll all be hunky-dory in time for November – let's hope so.

Vexx fights with his talons, irreversibly attached to his arms

Levels are quite big but there's nothing much that's new here

That lump of meat is a heart – collect it to gain a bonus

The Giant Cave Of Glowing Snot awaits our hero's nasal contribution

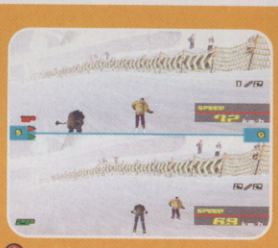
Swimming's just too difficult

CVG RECKONS

Large but not particularly exciting levels, but the gameplay is solid enough. **Jimmy**

Working out the right time to corner is imperative to winning

The tumbles are as painful as ever. Blood and snow don't mix



Multiplayer action is back but only with two players

ALPINE RACER 3

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **DECEMBER** DEVELOPER: **NAMCO** PUBLISHER: **SONY**

The best view in the Alps, according to some people

In the Slalom event, you must pass between the flags or lose time

Some of the courses are more psychedelic-looking than others

Have you ever wanted to jump off a mountain wearing only a snowboard and a pair of hotpants? If so, you're probably reading this from inside an alpine loony bin.

Either that or you're one of the characters in the latest instalment of Namco's Alpine Racer series. The game sees racers of varying styles – from freestyle snowboarders to straight-up skiers – going against each other down crazy, 2000-ft mountains.

With five different game modes, eight characters and nine courses, there's lots of variety on offer. So if sliding down mountains at insane speeds is your thing, then go see a psychiatrist. Failing that, wait for our review next month.

CVG RECKONS

The deluge of skiing games has slowed down of late, so this game is highly anticipated. **Jimmy**

HAVEN
CALL OF THE KING

FORMAT: **PS2 (GC AND XBOX NEXT YEAR)** OUT: **NOVEMBER 8** PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY** DEVELOPER: **TRAVELLER'S TALES**

You might think you need another 3D action-adventure like you need your testicles poking with electrically charged pipe cleaners. Luckily for your nads, Haven has something very special to set it apart from the pack – its game engine.

Haven does away altogether with tiresome load times and instead gives you a huge, apparently seamless, adventure. Think Jak And Daxter taken to nth degree – your handsome hero can hop into a space craft, fly to another planet, land and then carry on adventuring – all without taking any break for loading.

The gameplay is something special, too, characterised by incredible variety. You'll be doing something different every 10 minutes, from piloting hang-gliders to battling giant creatures with your space yo-yo.

It's gonna be huge. The sequence below gives you a hint at why.

NON-STOP HEROICS

To give you an idea of just how much the game throws at you, check out this sequence from the first hour-and-a-bit of the game and remember, there are absolutely no loading breaks at all. It's all one seamless gameplay ride.

Riding the lift, you know things are going to get worse before they get better in the mine – avoid the flames

After a few platforming manoeuvres, you need to shoot the back of this giant mech beast to kill him

A new route opens and you're confronted with big gems of doom

Haven stops to ponder the hectic events in wide-eyed wonderment. It just never stops round here

At the top of the gem passage Haven hops onto a monorail

Take on the electrified might of the Overlord by picking up the tokens that let you shoot from your laser

Then hop into the bike and burn rubber in a race for freedom across the plains of your home world

Defeat the mothership by blasting away its guns – but mind the debris

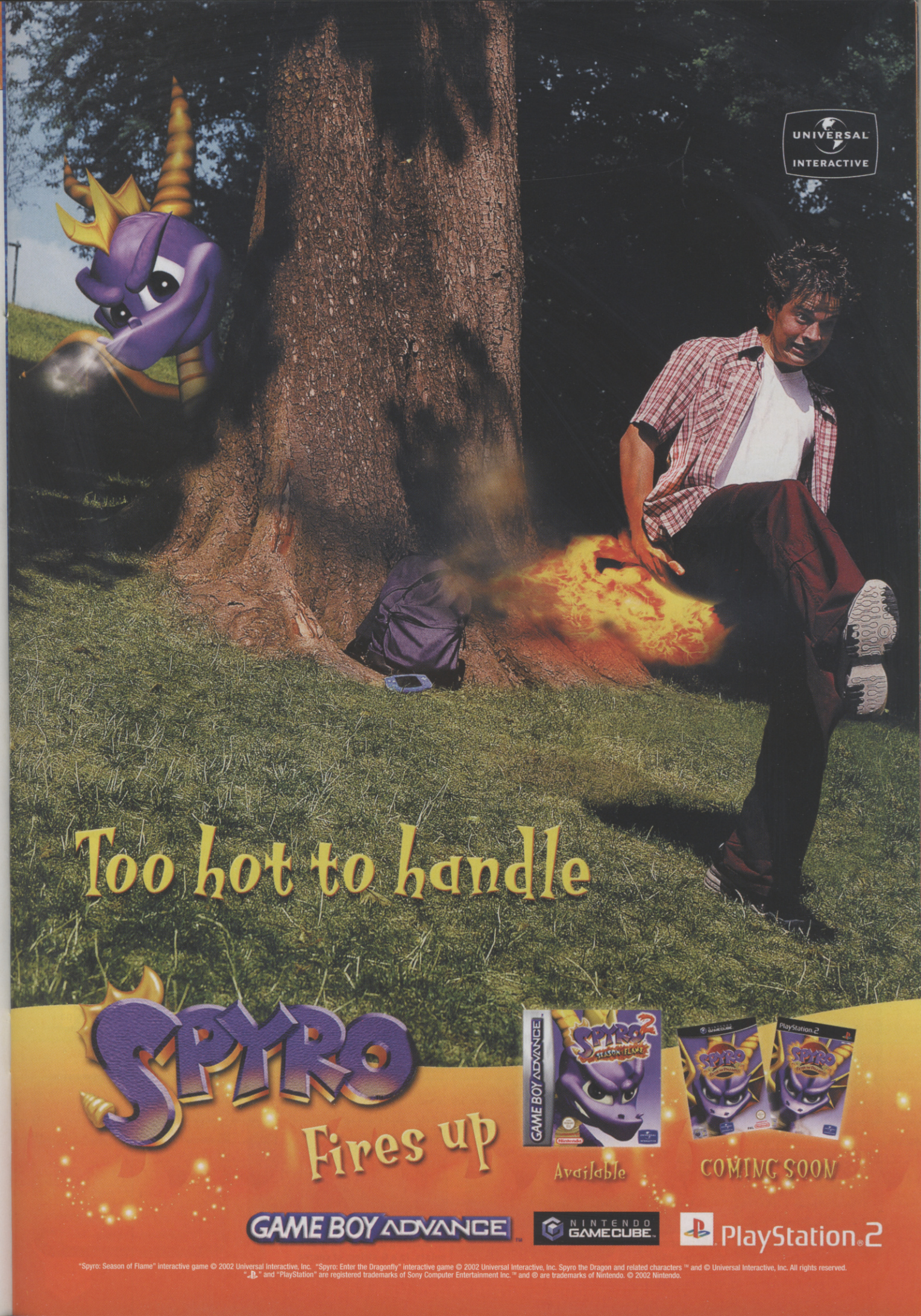
Cross the water to the castle where Haven's lady, Chess, is a prisoner

You need Talon but he won't help you unless you find his blue feathers

The ship is defeated but crashes down onto an unsuspecting village

CVG RECKONS

This is not just another adventure: you never know quite what's coming next in your quest. Haven is going to rock very loud. **Lee**



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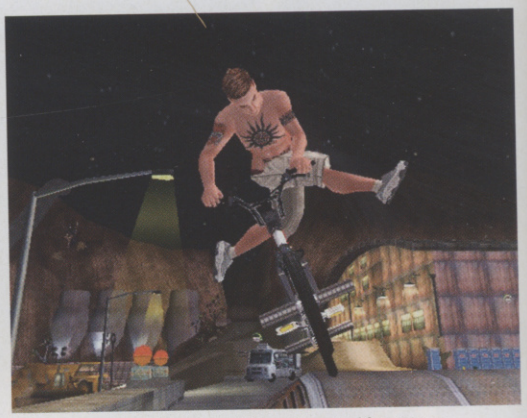
Star jumps, bikinis and BMXs don't *normally* mix



You can customise everything, down to his tattoos

BMX XXX

FORMAT: **PS2/GC/XBOX/GBA** OUT: **NOVEMBER** DEVELOPER: **AKA ACCLAIM** PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**

BMX XXX is going to annoy a lot of people. It'll annoy the PC brigade with its brash humour and big breasts; it'll annoy younger gamers who won't be able to get hold of a copy to see the beauties on display; and it'll annoy gamers who think that games with swearing and lewd jokes are 'immature'.

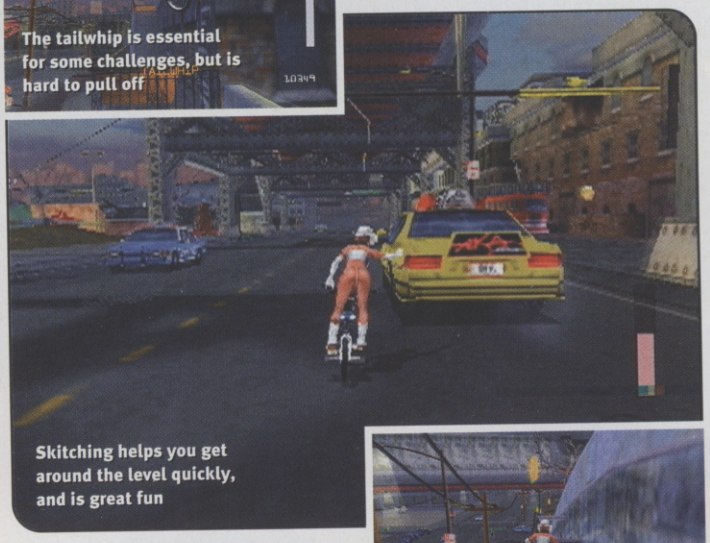
But we love performing tailwhips while, in the background, a badass pimp walks around with his pink poodle. So hey, call us immature.

This hardest of hardcore BMX games is an offshoot of the Dave Mirra games, but now Mr Mirra and his fellow licensed riders are gone, and we're left with a game that revels in its American Pie-style humour.

FREE TO FEEL GOOD

Like Tony Hawk's 4, XXX has all but dispensed with the time limit. Instead, you ride around a level, taking up the public's challenges for extra points. But along with the usual tasks, such as impressing other riders with your BMX prowess, you'll have to do such sordid tasks as delivering hookers to a hotel and giving a backie to a bitch (poodle, that is) so she can give a different kind of backie to the local mutt. Your mum would be proud.

The tailwhip is essential for some challenges, but is hard to pull off



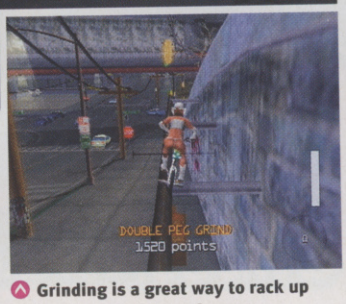
Skitching helps you get around the level quickly, and is great fun

It's always good to see Mother Nature hard at work. A delightful scene

SHOW ME THE HONEY

There are over 50 challenges across nine levels, some of which are very difficult to pull off. But you get more than just points for being the best. If you manage to complete the challenges set by club bouncers, you're treated to live videos of strippers. That's strippers. Live. So your hands won't only be sweaty from bashing buttons.

However, this game's not *all* titties and tittering: a solid gameplay engine, based on that of Aggressive Inline, underpins the game. There are over 100 tricks, making for thousands of trick combinations, along with smooth animation and huge environments. Add to that the option to change the appearance of your rider and make your own bike park, and you have a game that might just give Tony Hawk's 4 a run for its money. Well, we can dream.



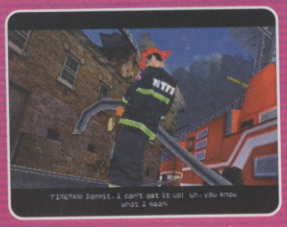
Grinding is a great way to rack up points. In a G-string, of course

CVG RECKONS

Looking like a welcome break from the norm. The XXX content coupled with good gameplay mechanics could breathe new life into the extreme sports genre. **Jimmy**

BUNCH OF WEIRDOS

With over 50 challenges in the game, there'll be a lot of strange folk to meet. Here are some of the choice picks from the levels we've played so far.

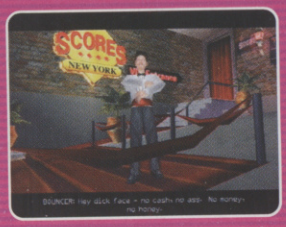


This firefighter will need your help to get it up. His hose, that is

You'll need to give backies to the local hookers to get them down to the hotel

Da pimp! He might look camp, but he talks like a badass

This hotdog vendor wants to be king of the wieners

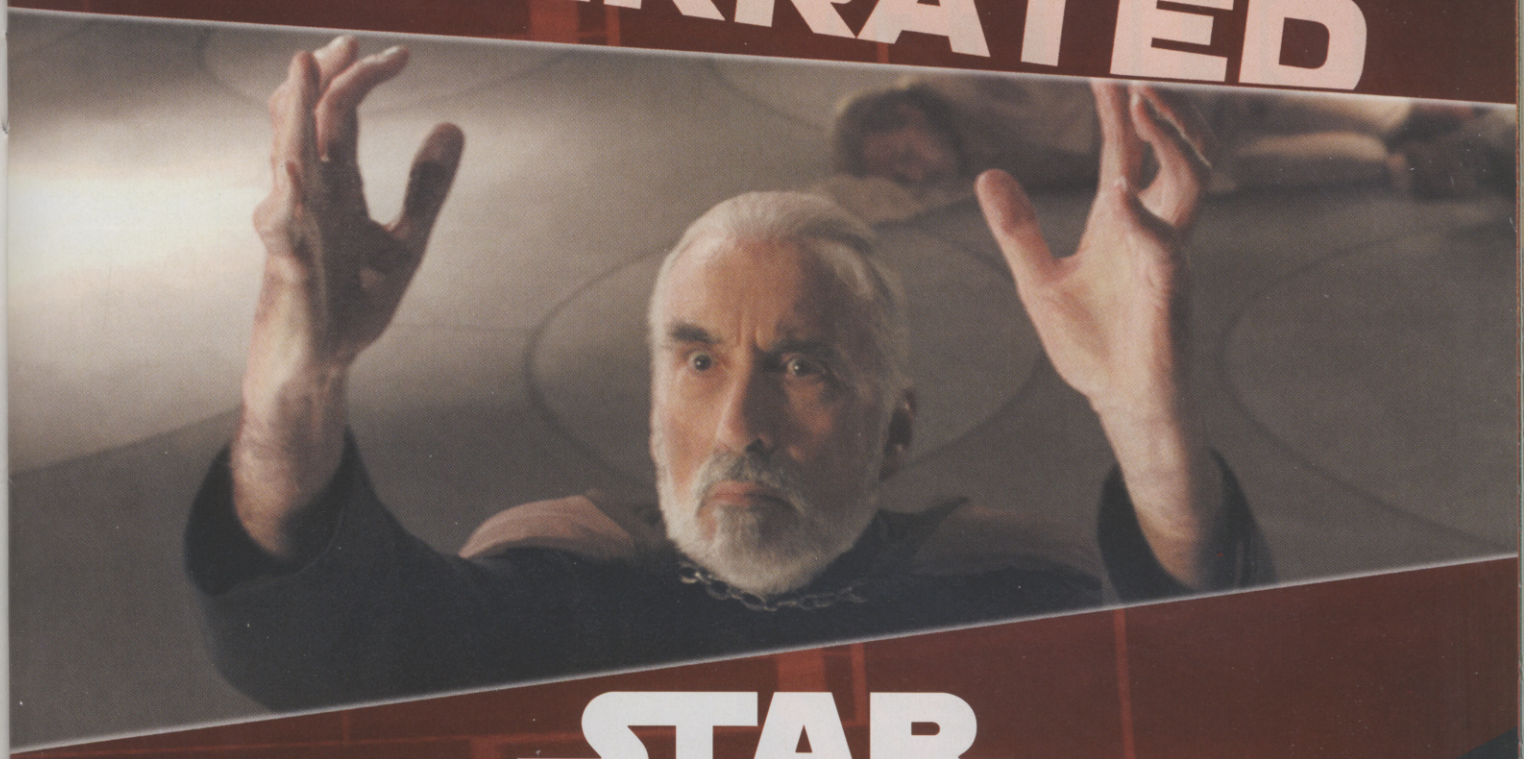


The strip club bouncer. Only he lies between you and titillation

You can customise your character to look as sexy or as nerdy as you like

The usual multiplayer modes are included too

JEDI ARE OVERRATED



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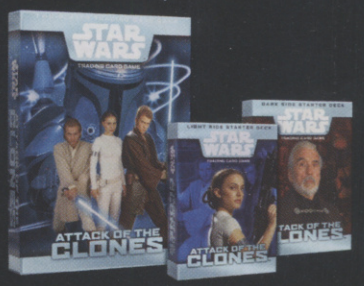

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TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

Caught in the headlights. Friendly agents give you help along the way

FORMAT: **XBOX** OUT: **NOVEMBER** DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

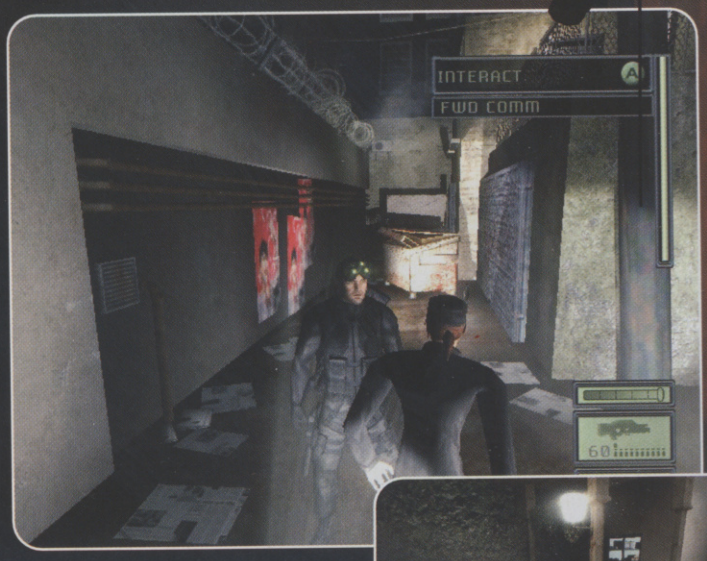
Tom Clancy's novels have sold 80 million copies, spawned six movies, and there's a load of games inspired by his work: Sum Of All Fears, Rainbow Six, Raven Shield... the list goes on. He must be minted.

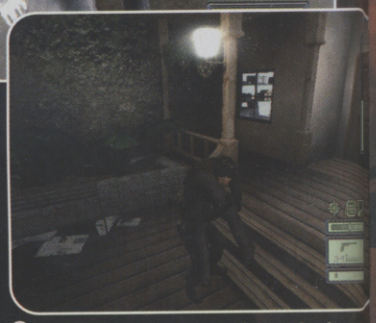
Now, yet another Clancy-based thumb-masher is coming your way in the shape of Splinter Cell. You play Sam Fisher, a black-ops agent of Third Echelon, a secret NSA (National Security Agency) offshoot and the splinter cell of the title. Only called in when the proverbial hits the fan, you are the last resort.

SILENT KILLER

Given Clancy's usual subject matter of choice, it won't come as a huge surprise to hear that this game involves the United States Government and covert operations, so prepare yourself for the familiar tense times in front of the television.

Stealth is of the utmost importance, of course. Only a small handful of people know of your existence and you want it to stay that way. As a result, contact with the civilians roaming any of the 14 levels is strictly forbidden.





As in Hitman 2, you can pick up dead bodies and place them out of sight

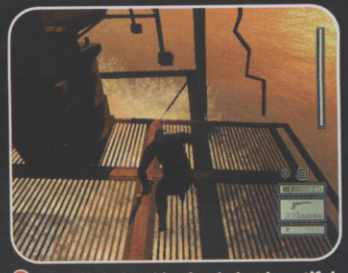
Go on, shoot! But you'll have to be careful – it doesn't take much to kill you

OIL-BASED LOVIN'

Missions vary from targeting a particular enemy to rescue operations and plain reconnaissance. In one level, based inside the CIA headquarters, you must reach your target without killing any of your Government operative buddies. Meanwhile, the mission based on an oil rig is more platform-orientated, as you try to find a way through a mass of pipes and planks, eventually crawling through a pipe filled with mucky black diesel.

Another mission requires you to slide down a zipline, run through a burning building, then jump across elaborately decorated balconies – just to stay out of sight. The minute you step foot on the street, the mission is aborted.

Your character will have a range of very cool moves to avoid detection, and some high-tech gadgetry to get the better of enemies. You won't have the ability to pick up your victims' weapons, but why would you want a plain old handgun when you have a super sniper gun with laser sighting and an ice cream maker anyway?



The oil rig level is simple but beautiful

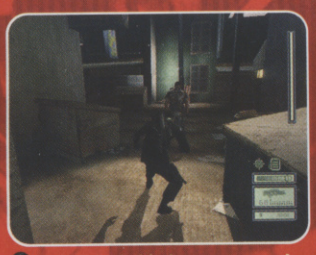
JAW-DROPPING BEAUTY

But it's the graphics that make this game really special: they are simply the mutt's nuts. On the aforementioned oil rig, the orange

BUST A MOVE

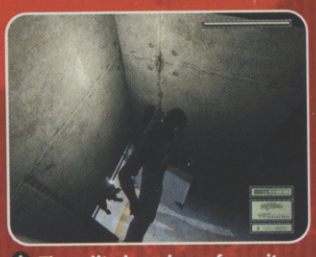
Jean-Claude Van Damme, eat your heart out, because this secret agent can do the splits between 10-foot-high walls. That's along with loads of cool moves that make this guy more flexible than your average Olympics gymnastics champion.

Slide down ziplines: bring up your feet to travel even faster

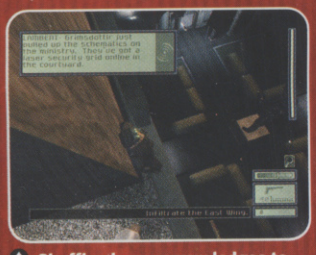


Sneak up behind an enemy and pop a stealthy cap in his ass

You can shimmy across pipes to avoid dangers and get to new areas



The splits-jump is our favourite. Drop down and surprise the enemy



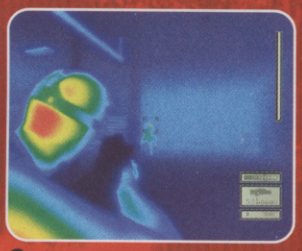
Shuffle along narrow ledges to avoid detection and save your skin

Climbing up pipes and similar objects is a guilty pleasure

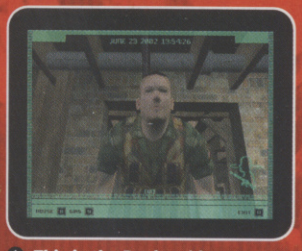
INSPECT A GADGET

This game will be a gadget freak's dream come true – there's a huge array of items for you to fiddle with, all of which play an important part in the game. With the amount of gizmos under Sam Fisher's belt, you may as well call him Batman.

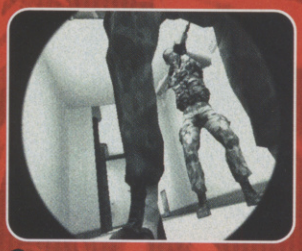
Night-vision goggles are an action game staple, but they're cool so quit complaining!



The thermal vision facility is even better for seeing enemies in the dark – and it looks pretty!



This is the Deployable Reconnaissance Camera: get your mouth around that (not literally)



Thread the Snake Cam through narrow gaps in walls to spy on enemies – another handy tool

The fire effects in this level are amazing. You can almost feel the heat on your face

glow of the setting sun reflects beautifully on the shimmering ocean, while flames lick against the construction's twisted metal. Even objects as simple as glowing fairy lights will have you agog.

While some of the effects are purely for show, you'll need to learn how to use light and shadow to keep out of sight. Our hero will need to crouch in dimly lit corners while making as little noise as possible if he wants to succeed.

The one main concern is that the level design could be too linear, not allowing for the kind of invention seen in last month's Hitman 2. If the designers address this, Splinter Cell could be Xbox's answer to Metal Gear Solid 2.

CVG RECKONS

This game could give us wet dreams just from the beauty of the graphics. And with cool gadgets and even cooler moves too, we're positively salivating in anticipation. Jimmy

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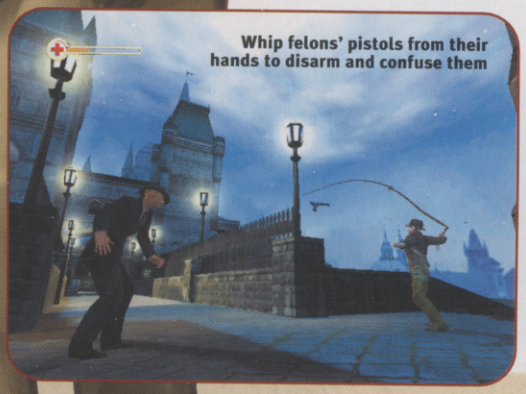
INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

FORMAT: **PS2/XBOX** OUT: **TBC** DEVELOPER: **THE COLLECTIVE/LUCASARTS** PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**

Fistfights are weighty and are accompanied by great sound effects

If you made a list of all the stuff that you'd love to see in an Indy game, it's likely you'd be able to tick off every item as you play his latest adventure. Trap-filled ancient tombs, sprawling citadels, combat that gives you the freedom to whip guns from villains' hands or engage in heavy-handed fistfights? Check. Classic Indy humour and a bit of cheeky romance? All there.

Playing The Emperor's Tomb is like reliving all the best bits of the Indy Trilogy. The Collective has used its expertise to get the combat spot-on and create that authentic Indy-adventure-yarn feel.



Whip felons' pistols from their hands to disarm and confuse them

The bad guys attack differently depending on where you are in the world

You control the gun, not the car, but it's still a great deal of fun

KNUCKLE SANDWICH

As you explore the castles and ancient structures, you'll encounter all manner of enraged bad guys practising their anger-mismanagement skills on your hide. You'll automatically enter combat mode and immediately engage in brutal hand-to-hand fisticuffs. You can punch, kick, and even grab and hurl your foe.

We're not warped or anything, but there's wicked satisfaction in walloping a goon in the groin with a giant spade and watching him double over in pain before kicking him in the head. You can then shoot them dead! And you thought archaeology was dull.

Let Mei Ying take on the bandits while you have a break from the beatings

Smash the environment and use the debris as weapons

He's in a diving suit with a gun; you have only your wits

With Lara Croft making a – some might say – 'questionable' departure from the tricks 'n' traps style gameplay that made her popular, Indy is left to keep the tomb-raiding tradition in check. The finished adventure will feature nine different locations, car-chase-style sub-sections and a sexy Asian partner called Mei Ying to buddy up with, all presented in gorgeous, atmospheric, high-res 3D visuals. We reckon Indy has the potential to kick Lara's pneumatic butt in every department.

CVG RECKONS

Clever levels, cunning bad guys, romance, comedy and hardcore pugilism: it's shaping up to be the perfect Indy game. Lee

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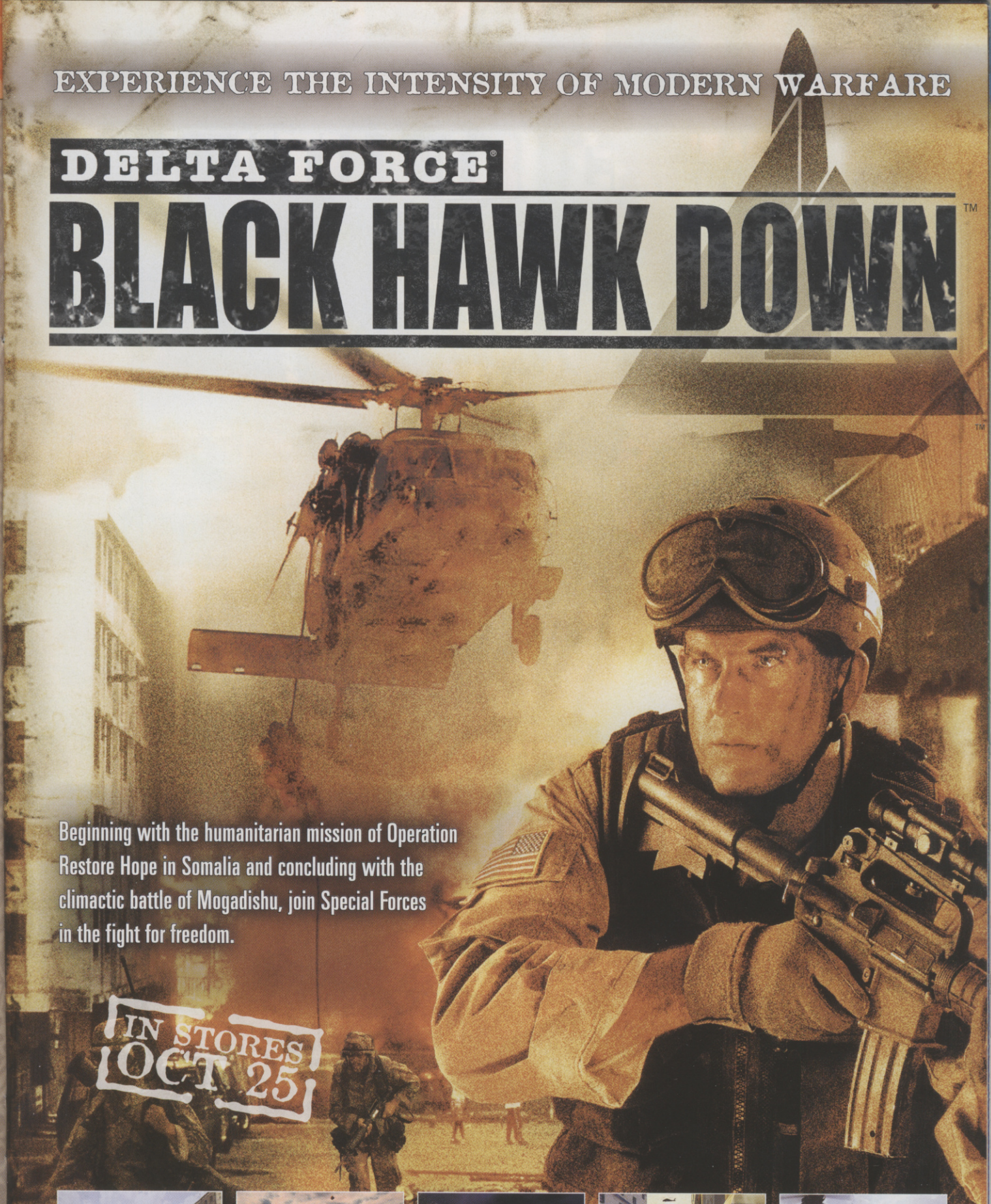
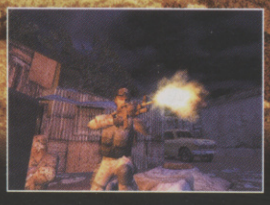


Beginning with the humanitarian mission of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and concluding with the climactic battle of Mogadishu, join Special Forces in the fight for freedom.

IN STORES OCT 25



NOVALOGIC® WWW.NOVALOGIC.COM NovaWorld PC CD-ROM

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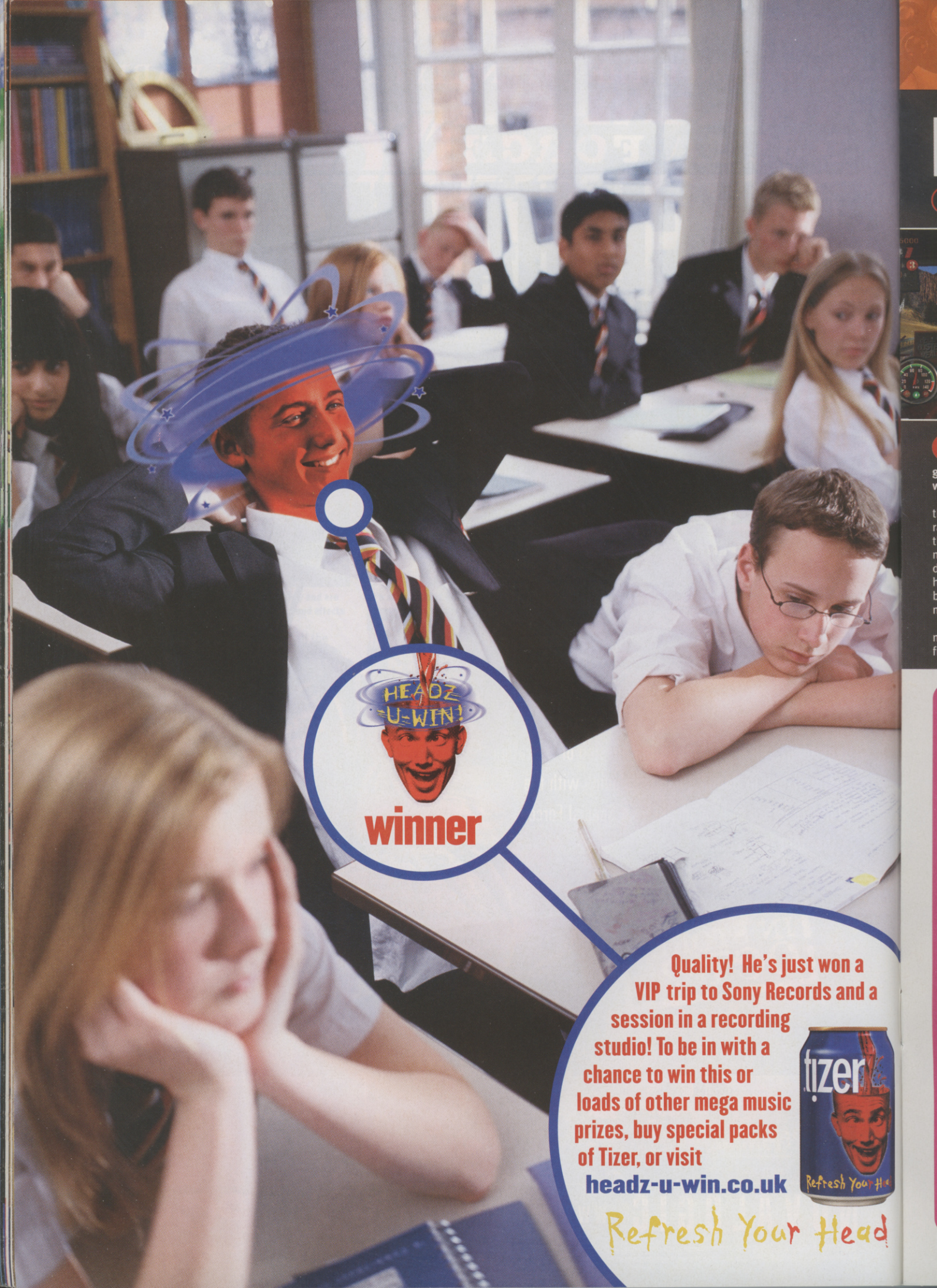
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BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

FORMAT: **XBOX/PS2** OUT: **NOVEMBER** DEVELOPER: **EUTECHNYX** PUBLISHER: **EMPIRE INTERACTIVE**

Crash through too many cars and you'll start attracting the rozzers

^ Flit between the cities and trade your gear to earn yourself loadsa cash

^ The city streets look sharp as you cruise around

^ Customise your 18-wheeler with turbo chargers and bull bars!

^ Gangs of bikers will give you just as much hassle as the cops

As a redneck trucker out to make hard cash, it's no surprise you'll go to any length to ensure your wallet is stuffed full of green.

In Big Mutha Truckers, breaking the law is an everyday occurrence and ramming your brothers and sisters off the road fair game. In fact, it's a necessary evil as it's your low-down, dirty siblings that give you the most hassle on the roads of the US, because they're out to make more money than you, whatever it takes.

While sweet-as wheel skills are a must when cruising the wide American freeways, a shrewd business sense is equally as important if you want to rake in the moolah in Big Mutha Truckers. If Salt City has a shortage of crude oil, for example, you can double your dollars by snapping up a load at the next city, then flogging it on for a fat wad of cash.

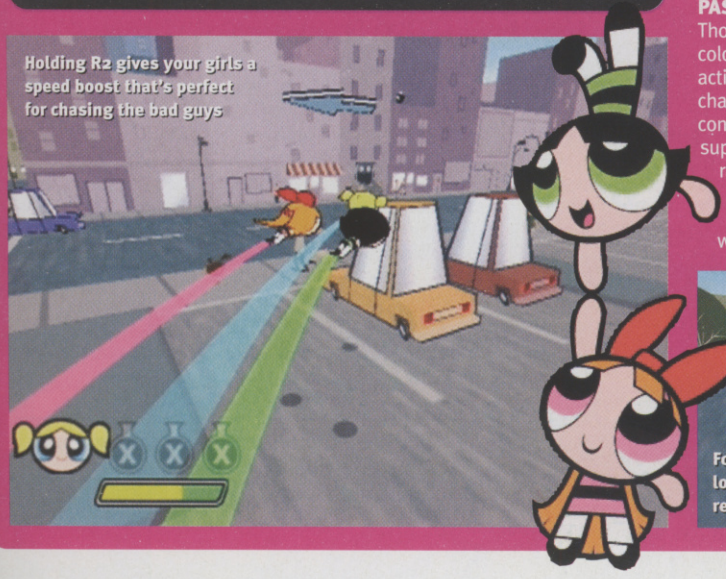
You can then use that money to upgrade your truck with different trailers to carry different loads, or bolt on a turbo to cut down the journey times between cities. A faster truck also makes it easier to outrun the law who, along with the biker gangs that patrol the streets, want to chow down on your ass.

CVG RECKONS

By no means a straightforward truck racer, but rather than a plus, that could be its downfall – especially if you're after an 18-wheeled white-knuckle ride. **Alex S**

THE POWERPUFF GIRLS: RELISH RAMPAGE

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **NOVEMBER 15** DEVELOPER: **VIS** PUBLISHER: **BAM!**



Holding R2 gives your girls a speed boost that's perfect for chasing the bad guys

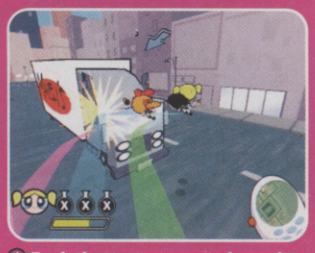
Using the same engine that allows for the crazed on-screen chaos in State Of Emergency, this somewhat fluffier game looks as if it'll be just as riotous.

It's election time in Townsville but some evil fiend is controlling the locals' thoughts and stealing their votes. It's up to the girls to put a stop to the foul deeds the confused citizens are committing. You control all three girls as you fly around, switching between them when you want to use their individual special attacks.

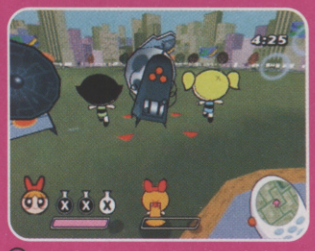
PASTEL PUGILISM

Though the graphics are pastel-coloured and the girls are cute, the action comes hard and fast. Different challenges see you disabling mind-control devices, chasing bad guys in super-strict time limits and wrecking rampaging trucks – and that's just in the first of the game's 30-plus missions. We're not ashamed to say we like this, even if it is a bit girlie.

Formation flying never looked so good – the girls are rendered true to the show



^ Bash the money vans to keep the Townsville election bribe-free



^ For a bad guy, Bad Mojo Jojo is pretty small – kick his hairy butt

CVG RECKONS

Quirky, crazy and surprisingly tough, although you may not want your mates to see you enjoying it. **Lee**

JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

FORMAT: **GC/XBOX** OUT: **NOVEMBER** DEVELOPER: **RAVEN/VICARIOUS VISIONS** PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**

Oh, hear the unique buzz of lightsaber and the metallic clank of Stormtrooper armour as your rival topples clumsily to the floor. Yes, life as Jedi is pretty darn sweet and now you can buy the instant 'Jedi In A Box' kit for your home console: Jedi Knight II lets you play as a Jedi in a port of the first- and third-person PC hit.

You play as Kyle Katarn, who's on a quest to regain his formerly relinquished Jedi powers in a bid to save the galaxy from an all-new terror. This story device allows you to learn a new set of Jedi tricks as you play, varying from extra leaping power to full mind control.

Lightning-strike Jedi powers will prove very useful in fights

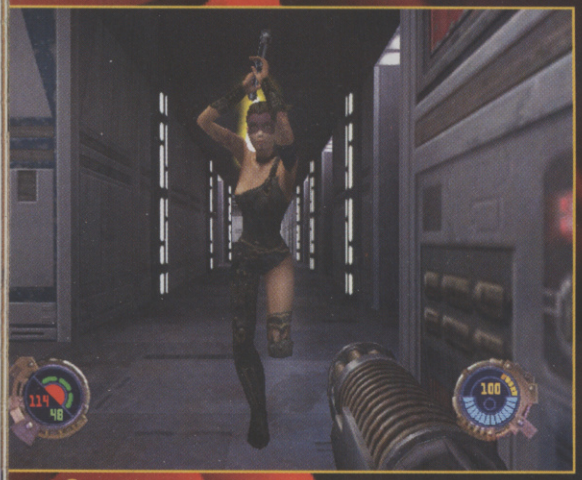
The plain graphics haven't had much of an overhaul since PC

LUKE BE A JEDI TONIIIIGHT!

The best part about being a Jedi, needless to say, is being able to wield a throbbing lightsaber. When Kyle brandishes a 'saber in the game, the action is third-person to help with aiming and defending. Then, when Kyle selects one of the many supremely cool weapons, the action morphs fluidly into a first-person view.

This mix of styles works well and you'll find the game is much easier to control with a joypad than with a PC and mouse set-up.

Droids, droids and more droids – take them down quick, Kyle



But this young lady's so lithe and pretty – you can't really think she would want to take your head off?

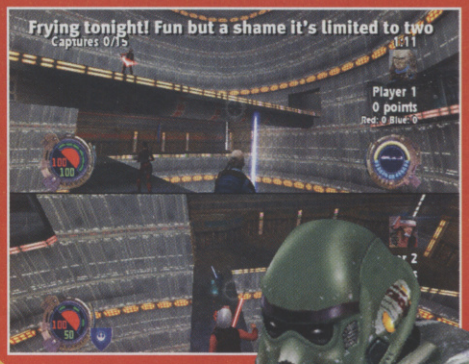
The new control interface makes selecting weapons dead easy

TWO CAN PLAY THAT GAME

There are a few new multiplayer modes for the console versions of JKII, but it's hard to mask your disappointment when you discover you can only play them with one other person. No four-player, no Xbox Live! functionality. What's there is good, but we're not sure it'll be enough.

Looks very plain but at least it moves super-fast

There's a new weapons -only mode on console



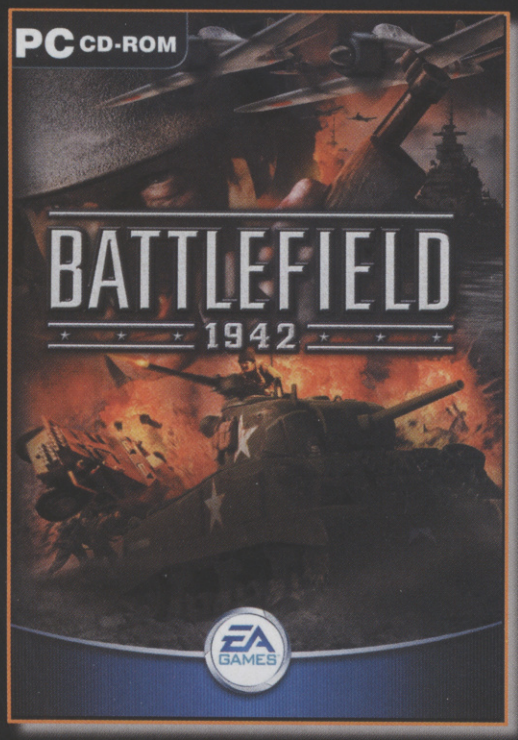
Besides a new bonus level, though, there's actually not a lot that's new in this port. The graphics are adequate but unremarkable and the action looks like it'll be solid without concealing too many surprises.

There's no question that JKII will be as good as the PC original, but you'd be forgiven for expecting perhaps a little bit more than that.

CVG RECKONS

JKII's old PC roots still show through but this should still be a solid, if rather unspectacular, action game. Lee

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON



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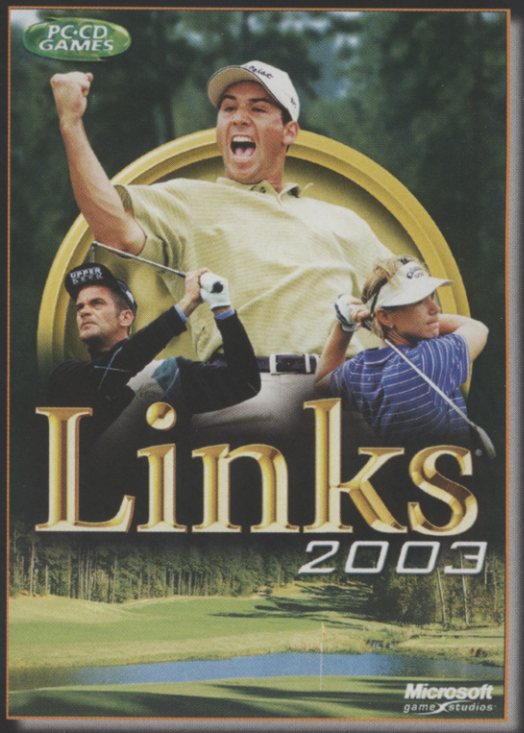

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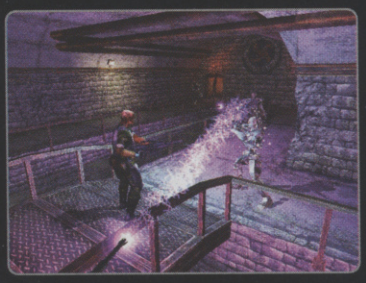

XBOX AND PS2 SCREENSHOTS SHOWN

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Image of Lara Croft © Core Design Limited 2002

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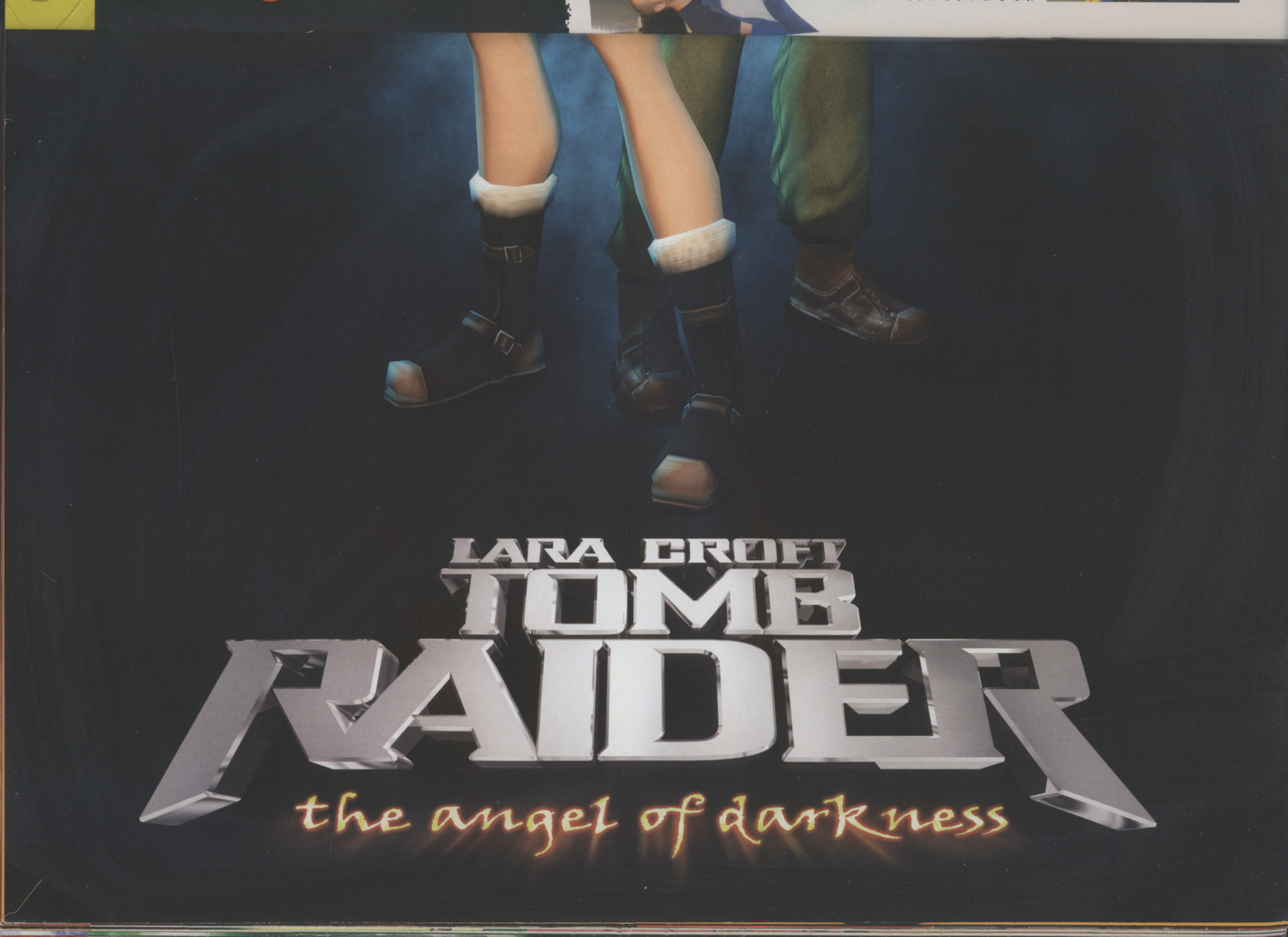

LARA CROFT
TOMB
RAIDER
the angel of darkness

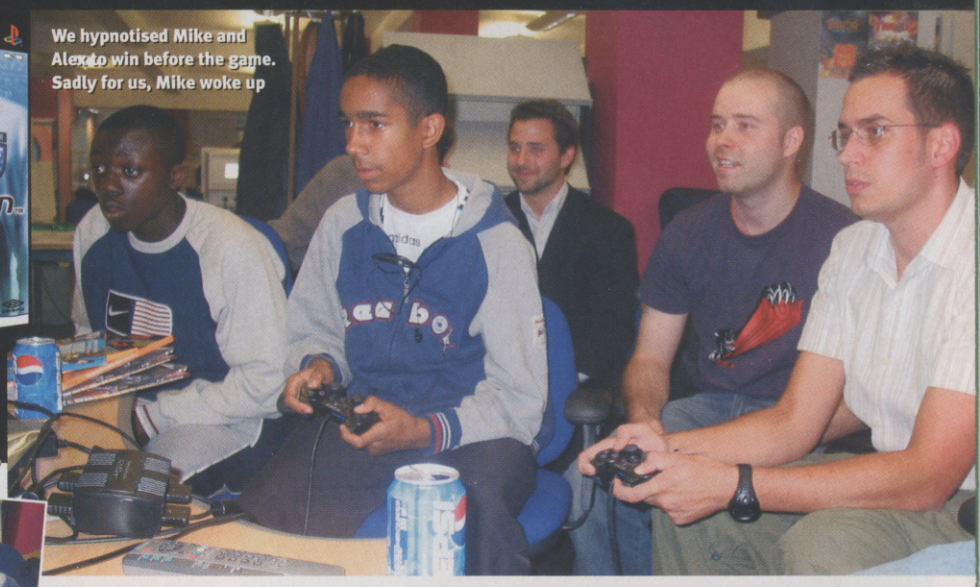
CHALLENGE CVG

(IF YOU THINK YOU'RE HARD ENOUGH)

TAKE ON CVG AT THE GAME YOU WERE BORN TO PLAY, AND YOU COULD TAKE HOME A LIMITED EDITION CVG T-SHIRT

CHAMPIONS! CHAMPIONS! CHAMPIONS!

We kick off this month with Pro Evolution Soccer 2, a game we've been playing for months. If you include all the years the Pro Evo series has been around, we've been honing our skills for seven years! So we needed a strong challenger. In fact, we needed six. Here's what happened when Matt Kinsella, James Burden, Jan Finn, William Donkoh, Duncan Mackintosh and Joe Wells took on the Champions at home. A little clue: We w*n!



We hypnotised Mike and Alex to win before the game. Sadly for us, Mike woke up

William and Jan had the skills, and the teamwork

Jan sees his chance for the goal that won the game

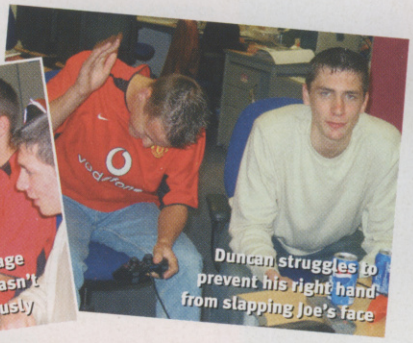
FRANCE Vs BRAZIL 2-1

Playing as France, visitors Jan (14) and William (15) scored with only 17 minutes gone, running the ball in. "A cheap Poundstretcher of a goal", spat Alex. But quality soon followed in the 33rd minute when a French ball nudged dangerously across the 18-yard box, splitting the keeper in two. Just before half time Ronaldo slotted the ball comfortably past Barthez, Mike shouting "Scorchio" to our embarrassment. A French foul in the 88th minute gave Alex the chance to equalise from just outside the box, but it whistled just over the cross bar. The end.

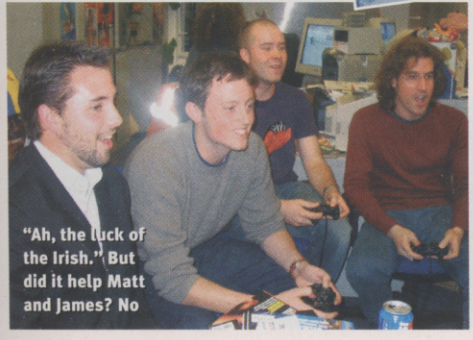
GUNNERS Vs MAN U 1-0

Duncan Mackintosh (17), a Man U fan from London. We made him suffer by insisting that he team up with his reluctant pal, Joe (17). Jaime and Mike took the game, but only just! Poor Joe. Duncan blasted him the entire game for missed opportunities, while Jaime and Mike worked the pitch. A chance in the 75th minute for Man U ricocheted off the post. Gutted. The game went to extra time, but despite Man U winning a foul in the first period, Arsenal scored from a corner in the second.

It got to the stage where Jaime wasn't taking it seriously



Duncan struggles to prevent his right hand from slapping Joe's face



"Ah, the luck of the Irish." But did it help Matt and James? No

ENGLAND Vs IRELAND 2-1

James 'Beard' Burden (23), and Matt 'His Pal' Kinsella (22) chose Ireland, well, because they're both Irish. All through the match James chirped repeatedly, "Ah, the luck of the Irish". It started with Robbie Keane's bullet past Seaman from inside the box. It became annoying when England's Emile Heskey dented the Irish post in the 40th minute. It ended when McAteer got a red card for a late tackle! England earned their equaliser with 60 minutes gone, but had to wait until extra time for a cheeky long ball from Mike, punishing Ireland for taking their goalie walkies.

THE FINAL RESULT

WINNER CVG

We won, of course! We always score, because we are the champions. It's up to you to come here and prove us wrong!

William and Jan did all CVG readers proud

CVG: When we score, we score for you!

Only bring a mate if they have the skills...

COME ON! HAVE IT!

You think you're pretty good, right? You think you could just walk into our office and beat us on any game you could name, make us cry? You really think so? Well, come on then! Let's see if you're good for the challenge! Write and tell us which game you think will bring us to our knees, and we'll invite you to our office for a showdown. You versus CVG: think you can handle it? Fill in the form!

HELLO, MY NAME IS: .....

BUT YOU MUST CALL ME ..... [nickname]

AND I'M ..... [age]

I AM THE BEST AT: ..... [game name]

MY ADDRESS IS: .....

.....

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Send to: CVG Reader Challenge, CVG magazine, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD

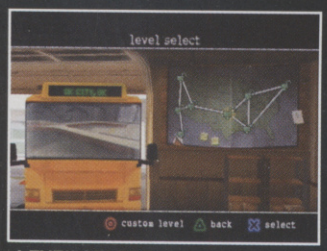
GET THE MOST OUT OF THE GAMES YOU'VE GOT

EXTENDED PLAY

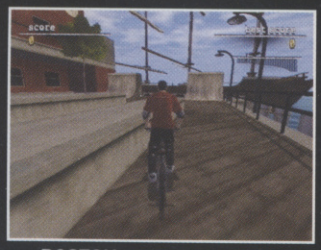
Keep on bailing your BMX in Mat Hoffman's? Can't unlock all the characters in the rib-breaking Tekken 4? Well you don't need to be a Digital Demon to get the most out of your games, you just need to cheat. Go on, play dirty!

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

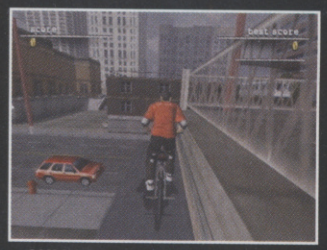
Enter any of the following codes at the Press Start screen. To make them work you need to tap them in quickly. A noise will confirm correct code entry.



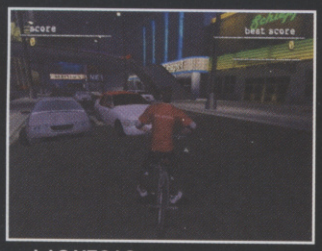
LEVEL SELECT: Square, Right (2), Triangle, Down, Square



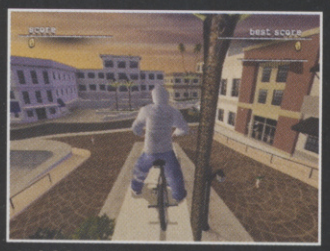
BOSTON: Square, Up, Down, Down, Up, Square



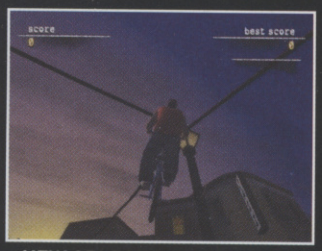
CHICAGO: Square, Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle, Square



LAS VEGAS: Square, R1, Left, L1, Right, Square



LOS ANGELES: Square, Left, Triangle, Triangle, Left, Square



NEW ORLEANS: Square, Down, Right, Up, Left, Square

PORTLAND: Square, X, X, Triangle, Triangle, Square

DUKE NUKEM ADVANCE

GBA To access the cheat menu, hold down L and then quickly tap in Left, Up, A, Up, Left, A, Start, Select.

TEKKEN 4

PS2 **EXTRA CHARACTERS:** It's best to set the difficulty level to Easy, Rounds to 1 and Round Time to 30. The characters are unlocked in the following order: Jin, Bryan, Violet, Nina, Lei, Julia, Kuma, Heihachi and Combot.

PANDA: Highlight Kuma; press Circle.

EDDY GORDO: Unlock all the other characters, then play as Christie Monteiro and beat Story Mode again. Next return to the character select screen, highlight Christie Monteiro and select her using Right Punch Triangle. When the match starts you will be Eddy Gordo.

SCHOOL GIRLS: Finish Story Mode with Ling Xiaoyu. Return to character select, highlight Ling and select her using Right Kick Circle to play as her friend Miharu. To play as Ling in her schoolgirl outfit, complete Story Mode with Ling and select her with Right Punch Triangle.

TOCA RACE DRIVER

PS2 For a few extras in this tense racing sim, try entering the following codes.

REALISTIC HANDLING: Enter SIM at the bonus screen.

BETTER DAMAGE: Enter DAMAGE at the bonus screen.

SEE THE CREDITS: Enter CREDITS at the bonus screen.

REALLY STUCK?

Totally stumped by a game? Ridiculed by your mates? There is hope: the Computer And Video Games Tips Helpline.

0906 466 4659

Open seven days a week, 8am-11pm. On the very rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team, who guarantees to find you an answer within 24 hours.

Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does before calling. In case of problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6155.

MAFIA

PC Beat the game to unlock free ride extreme mode where there are no cars or cops for an easy life.

WARCRAFT 3: REIGN OF CHAOS

PC Press the Enter key to display the message box and type in one of these codes, then press Enter again. A message should confirm correct code entry.

INSTANT DEFEAT: somebodysetusupthebomb
CONTINUE AFTER LOSING: strengthandhonor
NO SPELL COOL DOWN: thedudeabides
DISABLE VICTORY CONDITIONS: itvexesme
GOLD: keysersoze (number)
LUMBER: leafittome (number)
GOLD AND LUMBER: greedisgood (number)
QUICK DEATH: iocainepowder
NO TECH REQUIREMENTS: synergy
LEVEL SELECT: motherland (race) (number)

TUROK EVOLUTION

GBA Dino destroyer Vince Mainolfi has hunted down these passwords for the handheld version of Turok Evolution. To input the codes, select the One Player option, then press Continue.

AREA 1:
The Battlefields
LEVEL 1.2
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8T87 NL46K
LEVEL PASSWORD: 6T8K
LEVEL 1.3
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8T87 NL46K
LEVEL PASSWORD: T7R3
LEVEL 1.4
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8T87 NL46K
LEVEL PASSWORD: 4V2T

AREA 2:
Abandoned Subway
LEVEL 2.1
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8T87 NL46K
LEVEL PASSWORD: 7NR1
LEVEL 2.2
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8977 N5408
LEVEL PASSWORD: VRoS
LEVEL 2.3
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8T77 NL42R
LEVEL PASSWORD: 2T74
LEVEL 2.4
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8T77 NL42R
LEVEL PASSWORD: 39KV

AREA 3:
Jungle Of Darkness
LEVEL 3.1
INVENTORY PASSWORD: K8T77 NL42R
LEVEL PASSWORD: KV41
LEVEL 3.2
INVENTORY PASSWORD: 55987 L5452
LEVEL PASSWORD: Vo52
LEVEL 3.3
INVENTORY PASSWORD: 5K987 V5452
LEVEL PASSWORD: 3678
LEVEL 3.4
INVENTORY PASSWORD: 5K987 V5452
LEVEL PASSWORD: LV15

AREA 4:
The Fortress
LEVEL 4.1
INVENTORY PASSWORD: 5K987 V5452
LEVEL PASSWORD: 3K21
LEVEL 4.2
INVENTORY PASSWORD: 5K987 V5452
LEVEL PASSWORD: 9VL2
LEVEL 4.3
INVENTORY PASSWORD: KK987 V2457
LEVEL PASSWORD: TV7L
LEVEL 4.4
INVENTORY PASSWORD: KK987 V2457
LEVEL PASSWORD: 5RTV

AREA 5:
The Final Frontier
LEVEL 5.1
INVENTORY PASSWORD: KK987 V245T
LEVEL PASSWORD: K69L
LEVEL 5.2
INVENTORY PASSWORD: KK987 V245T
LEVEL PASSWORD: 759T
LEVEL 5.3
INVENTORY PASSWORD: KL987 NT464
LEVEL PASSWORD: 364V
LEVEL 5.4
INVENTORY PASSWORD: KL987 NT465
LEVEL PASSWORD: TK8N

YOUR BEST TIPS

If you've got a star-quality tip that you want to share with your fellow CVG readers, or if you'd like our resident expert barmy Barny Zoeller to answer a query, send it into us at:
cvgtips@dennis.co.uk or
THE DOGHOUSE,
COMPUTER AND VIDEOGAMES,
DENNIS PUBLISHING,
30 CLEVELAND STREET, LONDON W1T 4JD

DEAD TO RIGHTS

XBOX At the main menu screen, highlight New Game then quickly press Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Right, Y, X, X. A cry will confirm correct code entry. Now scroll down to Chapters where you can select to play any of the game's 15 levels.

SMUGGLER'S RUN: WARZONES

GC When playing the main game, press pause, then tap Y, Y, Y, X, X, Z, Z to get infinite countermeasures.

GUNMETAL

XBOX The human race needs to survive – maybe these tips will help.

UNLOCK LEVELS
At the mission select screen, click the left stick, then press Black, R, then click the right stick.

SKIP MISSION
During gameplay, click the left stick, followed by White, White, Back, then click the right stick.

DIFFERENT MUSIC
At the main menu, click the left stick twice, the right stick twice, and then L, R.

PRETEND BRIEFINGS
Enter the following sequence at the armoury screen before missions 1, 3, 6, 8, 9 or 14: L, L, R, R, left stick, right stick.

BARNY'S PROBLEM CORNER

Is your brow furrowing into a deep crease? Allow Barny to sort out all your problems. Although he's not much cop at girl questions

HEADHUNTER

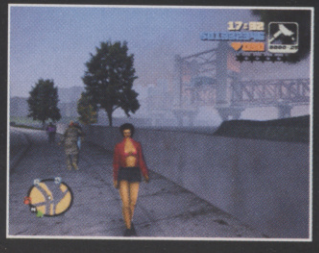
DC Q. I bought Headhunter and flew through most of it but I am now stuck near the end. I'm at the part where you fight Adam. After killing him I get stuck and I can't figure it out. What am I doing wrong?
Lou Hewit, via email

A. Okay, Lou, here's what you have to do. After you kill Adam make sure you press the switches (if you haven't already done that). Take the DNA that you get from Adam to Genetic Research and insert the Saline with the DNA to create the Bloody Mary Vaccine. Take this to Jack and give it to him. As Jack, you now need to go through the door with three Serpent keys and stand in the centre of the following room with your goggles on to see the code that allows you to reach the next area.

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

PS2 Q. My mate says you can get prostitutes into your car for more health. Is this actually true, as I can't seem to do it?
Darren Walton, London

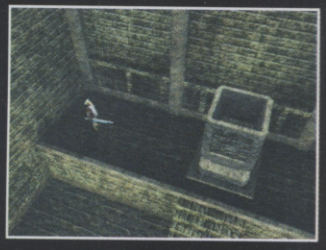
A. Yes, you can certainly try this. However, they won't always get in the car. To stand a strong chance of getting them you will need to have lots of money, a very flash car such as a Mafia Sentinal, and no Wanted level. It also helps if it is dark. Once you meet these conditions, stop your car near them. One or more prostitute should approach the vehicle, look in the window and then get in. Once in, drive to somewhere quiet and park. Your health will go up and your money will go down.



ICO

PS2 Q. Help, please, I'm stuck on Ico. I've got past the waterfall and up to a section behind, where I've pulled a lever that makes a piece of wood move up and down. I can see there is a switch located directly above the piece of wood but I can't get up to it. I think I am supposed to use the wooden piston to fling myself up but I can't get nearly high enough. How do I do it?
Adam Bent, via email

A. We won't argue that this is the trickiest bit of the game, but you can do it. Stand on the piston and press jump just as it reaches its lowest point. This is the only way to reach the ledge above and continue your game. Keep trying and eventually you should make it.



GUN VALKYRIE

XBOX Q. How do you beat the last boss? Nothing I do does any damage to its health bar and I get killed really quickly. Very frustrating.
Adrian Martin, via email

A. To beat this boss you first need to learn how to fly. Jump into the air and manoeuvre around quickly by using short bursts to perform boost combos. Once you've mastered this technique, you should be able to stay in the air for long periods of time, which is handy for avoiding most of the attacks thrown against you. You also need to be in midair to hurt the boss by using the GV Napalm attack (click down on both thumb sticks). This is the only attack that will cause damage to the boss. You will need to perform boost combos to refill the meter each time you deplete it.

TIMESPLITTERS 2 PLAYER'S GUIDE

Barny Zoeller walks you through the harder moments of Story mode

1 1990: SIBERIA

Walk up the steps around the largest building, cross the walkways, drop down into a room and collect the Timed Explosives. Throw a Timed Explosive onto the revolving satellite dish. Enter the room up here and press the switch. Check the rest of the buildings and blow up the two filing cabinets you find.

Enter the tunnel. In the long corridor at the top, turn the three steam valves in the alcoves. Enter the building on the other side of the dam and pick up the Anaconda Cart in the first room. In the room below are the last three filing cabinets, one in a side room and two before the steps. Flip the switch in the turbine room office (kill the remote guns from behind first). In the tunnel take the second door and press both switches in the side room to enter the secure room, where you can retrieve the Computer Disk.

Run to the end of the tunnel to get the Time Crystal. Go back to the turbine room office and insert the disk. Return to the end of the tunnel and plant three explosives on the biohazard container. Kill any mutants you see and go back to the dam, where you can use the lift to access the top. Get behind the big gun and blow up the chopper. Step on the nearby Time Portal.

By far the easiest way to kill any zombies that get in your way is by blowing their heads off

If you are on fire, return to the shower room and douse yourself in water to extinguish the flames

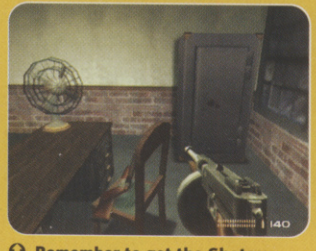
Snipe all the cameras to avoid detection

2 1932: CHICAGO

The first whisky barrel is opposite the first stairs. To drain, shoot holes in it. The second is at the bottom of the next set of steps. Answer the phone outside, then collect a gun from a dead thug and blow up Tony's brother's car.

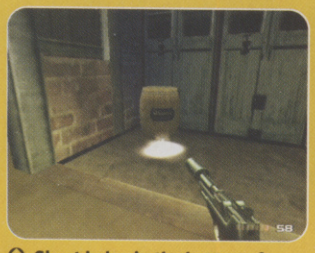
Drain a barrel to the right of O'Leary's. Talk to the man in the alcove opposite, then enter the pub. Kill the gangsters, then escort Marco round the corner and collect the TNT from the table.

Enter the building to the right of Marco's. Drain the last barrel at the bottom of the stairs, then use the TNT on the safe to get the Members Card. Answer the phone. Use the card on the gates at the end of the street. In the club kill the boss, collect the Time Crystal, and step on the Time Portal.



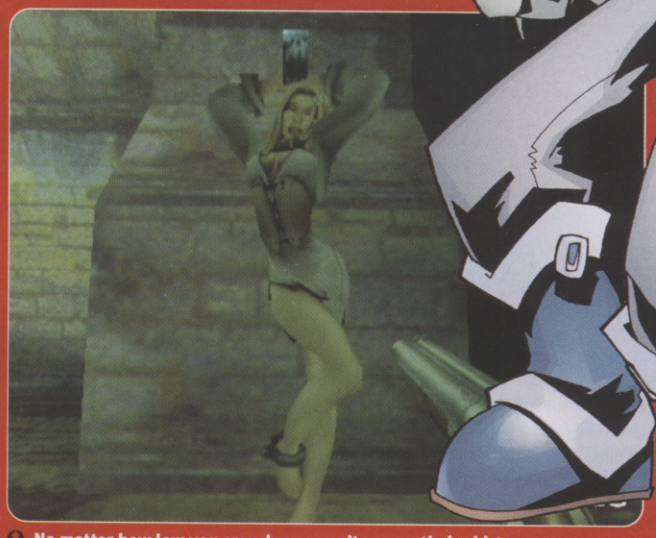
Remember to get the Shotgun from the chair by the safe

In the club, collect the double Tommy Guns from the side area



Shoot holes in the bottom of barrels to drain them

Splatter the car with bullets and force it to crash. Huh!



No matter how low you crouch, you can't see up their skirts

3 1985: NOTRE DAME

Use the shotgun to blow the heads off zombies as you progress through the tunnels. Pull the lever in the left-hand room. When you reach the wine barrels, stay away from the end to avoid being barbecued. Keep going and rescue your first maiden (woof). Blast the padlock to access the cells for a second maiden. The third is round the corner to the left (the one on the right is a zombie).

In the cathedral collect the crystal but ignore the girl. To lower her, go upstairs and pull a rope. Return to the girl and help the hunchback kill some zombies (let him kill most of the zombies to conserve ammo). Go through the left-hand door. Unload your ammo into the portal demon while trying to avoid the zombies. When it dies, go through the far door. Move cautiously around the rooftop and eliminate Jacques de la Morte with a few well-aimed shotgun blasts.

4 2280: RETURN TO PLANET X

Ignore the ships, grab the gun and drop down. Get the weapon part from the right after exiting the tunnel. When you get outside, run forwards and round to get behind the middle gun. Use it on the invaders and switch to the left one if you run out of ammo. Follow the canyon after the door opens.

Follow the route until you reach the crashed UFO where you can grab the other weapon part to make the Homing Launcher. Fight off the aliens and when it's over, go through the light beam on the UFO and through the back of the saucer. There is Armour lying to the right.

Follow the left-hand tunnel. Enter the small tunnel after you emerge. Follow the route until you go through yellow doors, then get behind the last gunpod and shoot down all the UFOs. Use the lift as you leave and enter the opposite tunnel at the bottom. When you reach the green UFO, use the light point to the side to get inside. Get the Time Crystal from the red area, then step on the portal before being killed.

These big guns have two types of attack; make use of both before switching guns

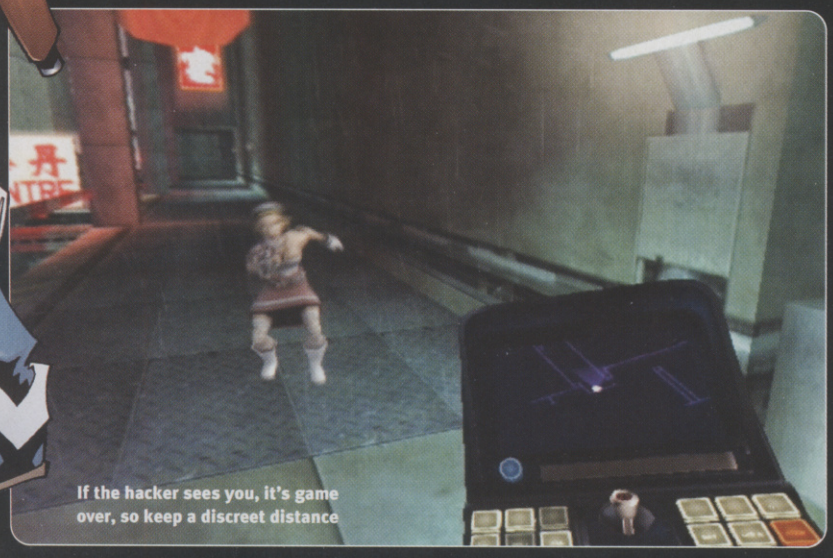
When two types of aliens are fighting, before joining in, wait until most of them die

5 2019: NEOTOKYO

Follow the hacker. Down on the street, stay on the other side of the road to avoid the cameras. In the first alley on the left, break the glass to get weapons. Use the Temporal Uplink to avoid the cameras and follow the girl. Duck behind a pillar to avoid the police car. Get past the security door.

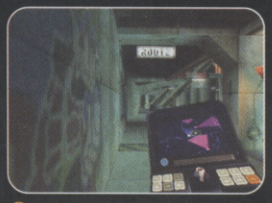
In the office switch to the third camera. Get the password, go to the laptop and input it. Pass into the room ahead (get the Astrolander Cart from a locker) for the Digital Camera. In the next room, take a photo of the creature and the documents in the side room, then upload in the previous room.

In the glass room pull the lever in the top right, then hide until the TimeSplitter dies. Return to the streets, going right at the crossroads. Round the corner kill the women in the left side-alley for the crystal, then run back to the end of the street to step on the portal.



If the hacker sees you, it's game over, so keep a discreet distance

Shoot the guns on the wall



Avoid the cameras

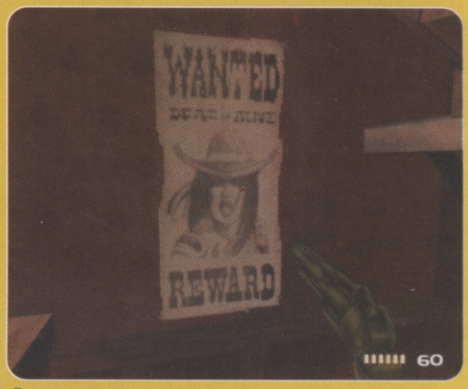
You can use these weapons

6 1853: WILD WEST

Walk down the main street and enter the Gold Rush Saloon to destroy a Wanted poster. Then go to the Sheriff's office and destroy the poster outside before heading in to get some Gun Powder. Walk round to the back and deface another poster located next to the arch. Push the cart up against the wall and make a trail of powder leading from the cart to a nearby box. Shoot the box a few times to ignite the powder.

When Ramona is free, escort her back to the start, then head to the mine. Enter a building on the right and shoot some suspended barrels to put out a fire. Rip up another poster on the side of a building to the left. After going through a short tunnel, the final poster is up on your right. When the Colonel shows up in the mine area, take both the handguns and quickly kill him.

Enter the hut on the far side and pull the lever. Return to the cart and push it until it breaks the barrier at the end of the track. Enter this tunnel and retrieve the crystal, then quickly run down the wooden platform by the waterfall and step on the portal.



There are five posters in all. To destroy them, just walk up to them and press the action button

The Colonel is easy to kill. Point both guns at him and pull the triggers

Make sure that the cart is right up against the wall and then set the gunpowder trail to the explosive boxes

7 1972: ATOM SMASHER

Go outside and switch off all the cameras. Open the door and punch out one of the guards standing nearby to seize his weapon. Next, kill all the guards in the area and a scientist standing straight ahead will disarm the first bomb. Run round to the next bomb and do the same.

Follow the corridor and turn the wheel on the other side. As you go upstairs, grab the Fire Extinguisher fixed to the wall and use it to douse the flames at the top to open the next door.

March down the long corridor. Duck into a side-room on the right and turn a valve. In the room opposite, control the magnet to pick up the bomb and dump it to the right. Continue down the corridor and put out the flames at the end.

In the next area, run round to the left and eliminate all the guards so that the scientist hiding in the container can get to work defusing the bomb. Press the switch to get to the next area.

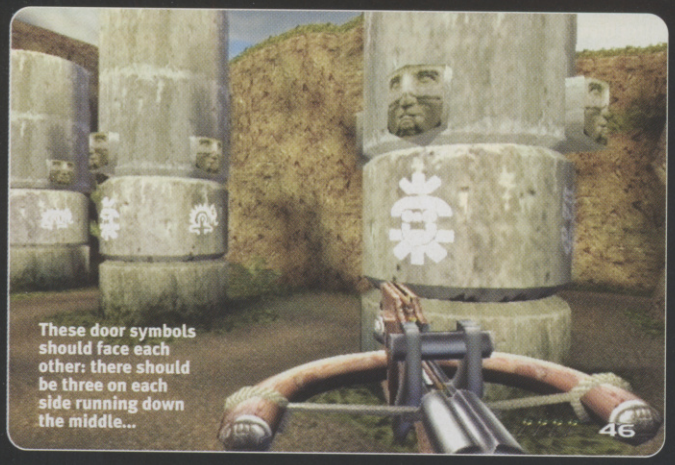
The final bomb is located at the top of the next ramp. Pull the lever near it once it's been disarmed. After you've done that, run along the steaming pipe to the door opposite and go inside and pull the levers. Run through where the beams were and kill everything. Pick up the crystal and pull three levers before stepping through the portal, which is located in the middle of this area.

Proceed slowly down this corridor and watch out for guards who pop out behind you

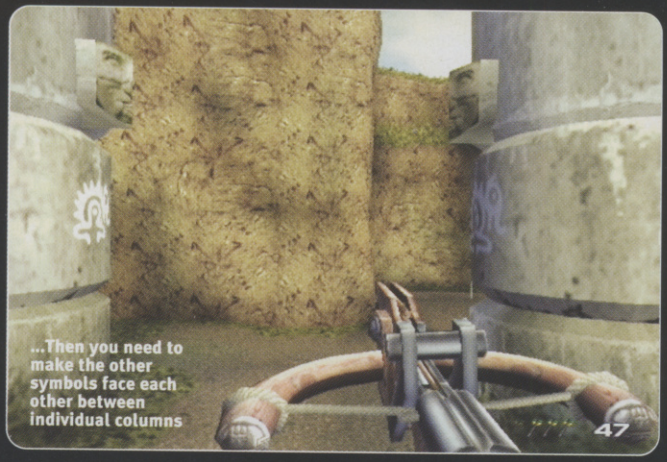
8 1920: AZTEC RUINS

Follow and kill monkeys. Get the crossbow, light your arrows in a fire and kill the bees nest and the tree golem. When you reach six pillars, make the face-like door symbols point to each other across the long gap. Then make the other symbols match each other on the sides (so squirrel faces another squirrel, etc.). Go through the door opened by this action and press the switch to open another door. This leads to the temple. Inside, press the switch under the stairs before you can go down.

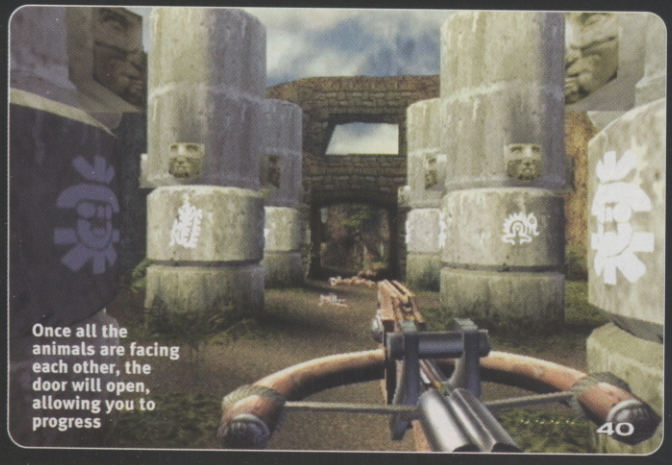
To kill the golems, lure them over a trap-door then stand on a stone switch. After they are all dead, go through the far door. At the rope-bridge, watch the stone faces on the walls and shoot them when they turn. Afterwards, as soon as you start going down the long steps you should be sprinting to avoid being crushed by a rock. At the bottom get the crystal, then locate the grenade launcher to the left and kill the golems. Then step on the portal at the back of the room.



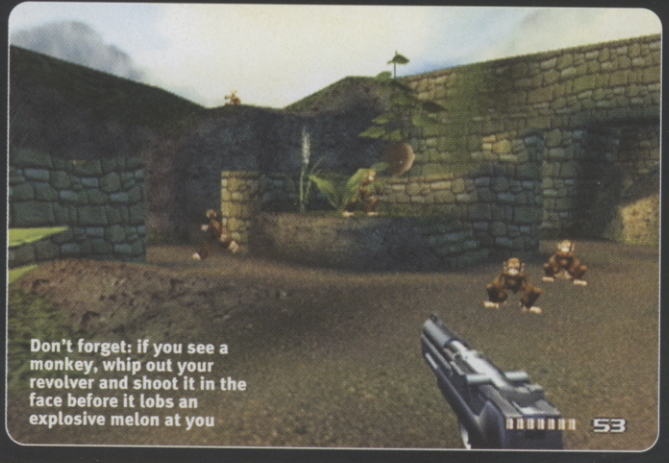
These door symbols should face each other: there should be three on each side running down the middle...



...Then you need to make the other symbols face each other between individual columns



Once all the animals are facing each other, the door will open, allowing you to progress



Don't forget: if you see a monkey, whip out your revolver and shoot it in the face before it lobs an explosive melon at you

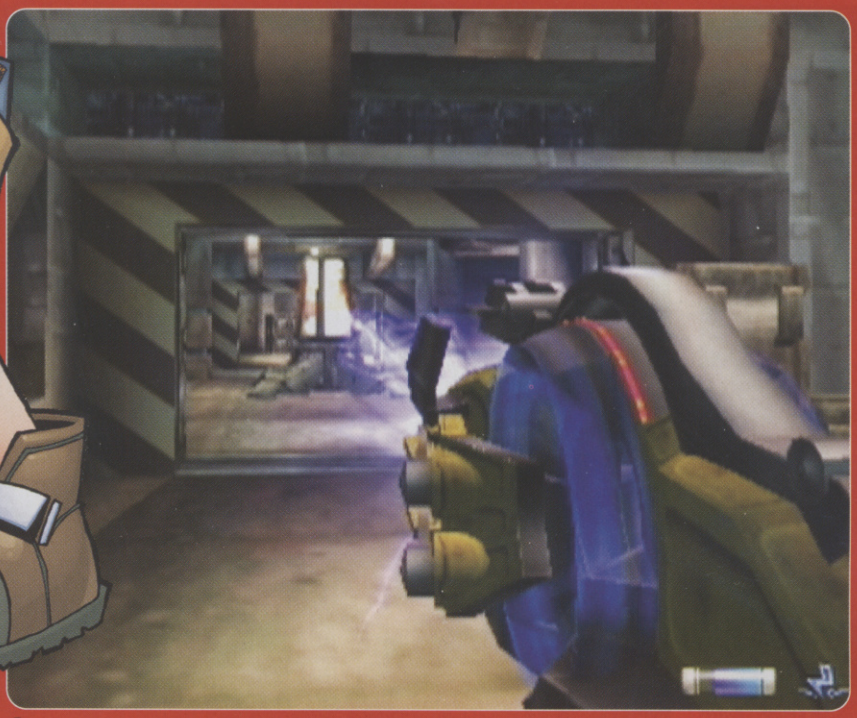
9 2315: ROBOT FACTORY

Head left from the first corridor. Avoid the beam, then switch it to defence mode at the far end of the room. In the next section, steer the remote into the green wall, then go through, collect the grenades and pull the lever. Backtrack to the start and go right.

Make your way around the factory and over the bridge. When you get down to the other side, pick up the Electrotool and use it on the node. Shoot all the robots that appear to reach the next area. Take control of a drone and move to the next room, where you should target all the feet of the next node until the shield is down. Then you can blow it up.

When you get a chance to control a security railbot, make sure you use it to kill as much as you can, even if this means luring robots back to where it can reach them. After activating the next switch, use the Electrotool on the spinning node to the right. Once that's taken care of, press the switch around the corner, then fight your way to the other side and press another switch. This will eventually blow the node. Now you should start ducking as this activates just about every robot left in the place (and you have to kill every single last one of them before the barrier opens to let you carry on).

After this you must defeat the massive machinist. Use the Electrotool on the small symbol in the middle while moving around to avoid its attacks and it will be over before you know it. Once that's done, go upstairs, retrieve the crystal, then step on the portal that appears in the middle of the lower area.



Stand well back and shoot the node with a long stream of electricity. Eventually it will blow

Get ready to take out a horde of robots

Shoot these tin cans square between the eyes

To escape from the bridge section, press all the working self-destruct nodes in the outer corridor

Once you get to the bottom of the lift, you should kill all the monsters you find, as they do not re-spawn

Use the minigun while you wait for the lift to arrive

10 2401: SPACE STATION

Follow the circular corridor all the way along. You will pass the self-destruct consoles, which you need to activate. Once you've got them all, a countdown will start. Get some Armour from the middle balcony, then drop down and go through the door marked 'hanger'. Press the switch at the end and get on the lift. At the bottom go right and collect an Environment Suit. Then fight your way through till you get outside.

With the mounted gun, shoot down all the TimeSplitters' ships attacking the station. Then head back through the airlock. Enter a corridor on the left. Run down and get the minigun then head round and into the centre of the station. Press the switch and jump on the lift when it arrives. Once it reaches the bottom, try to ignore all the incoming fire and look for a ship parked nearby. All you need to do to complete the game is to run into the back of the ship. Phew.

Sadly, all that effort you spent beating Story mode gets you nothing. If you want more, you had better start playing Arcade mode.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2 PLAYER'S GUIDE

Maximise your skills and uncover secret techniques with Dean Scott

1 FREE KICKS

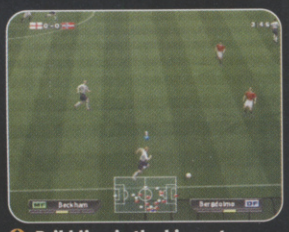
There's no easy formula for scoring free kicks. That wouldn't be the Pro Evo way. You have to practise long and hard on the training ground to master the split-second timing on the power bar. If you can, make sure you've got a left-footed player taking from the left side, and a right-footer from the right side.

Close range (18-25yds): From the right, line up so the ball will just miss the outside right of the wall (and goal). Go with just over one-third power, then hold down-left and R1 straight after setting the power. The ball should fly inside the right post. Do the exact opposite from the left-hand side

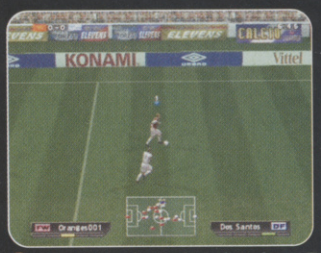
Long range (25-30yds): Aim just beyond the right of the wall. Apply half power, then hold up-left. You'll bend it at speed towards the top right corner

2 RUNNING WITH THE BALL

The double tap run has always been in the game (most players never use it) but it's critical here. While sprinting, double-tap in the direction you're running (holding the direction on the second tap) and you'll knock the ball on further to chase. Use it to get away from chasing defenders or beating one tackling weakly from the front.



Dribbling is the biggest challenge you face in Pro Evo 2



Even better is the long knock-on. Tapping R1 or R2 before you receive a pass makes your first touch a heavy one to get you away from an attendant defender. But hit both together the split second *before* you kick the ball in a sprinting dribble and you knock the ball on miles to chase. Use this to fully exploit space in front of you and totally murder teams on the quick counter. It's also great for going past goalkeepers.

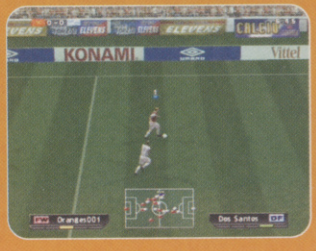
When bombing to the by-line, always hold R2 as you turn 180° to cut into the box to cross. Even better, turn 180, then hold R2 and press down right (assuming you were running left to right initially).

Step-overs and feints from tapping the shoulder buttons aren't much use. You're better mastering the sideways drag R2 and holding the pad up or down, assuming you're running straight left or right.

3 CORNER BALLS

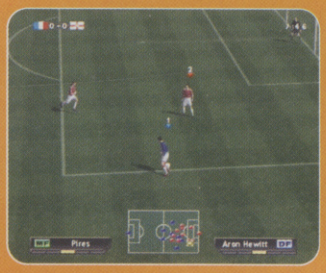
Whip corners in fast with curl. Try to miss the six-yard box. With a suitable player, line up with the middle of the six-yard box and give it half power or just over. Hold up-left to bend the ball, then square for the header.

Line up with a spare man (with the same power). Pull down-left and the ball pings along the ground ready for a first-time shot



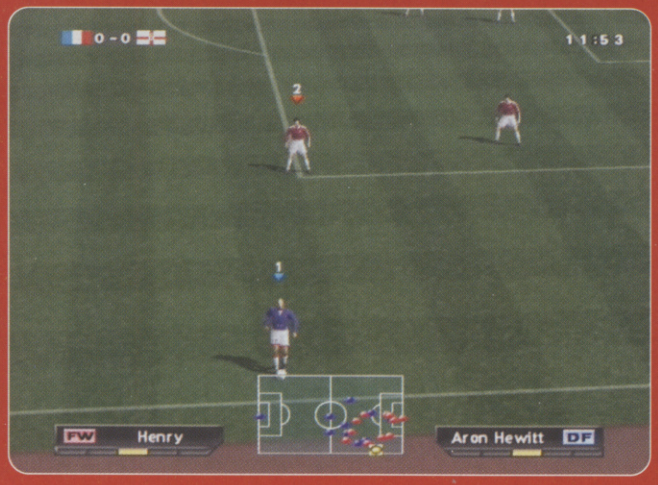
4 MANUAL DUMMY

Far better than the R1 dummy is a move we're calling the manual dummy. Usually, you run onto a ground-pass in a straight line, but by holding R1 and R2 you can pull off this line. CPU players tend to track the man, not the ball, so it foxes them. Either run 'across' a pass to get a better angle, or let another player run on.



5 DON'T GET SUCKED IN

Sick of your men chasing dead balls and touching it just before it goes out, conceding a corner or throw? Hold R2 and pull away from the direction of the run and he'll give it up before it runs off.



6 SHOOTING

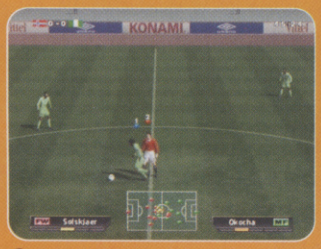
We're not trying to teach you to suck eggs here, so here's a couple of leftfield tips. Firstly, immediately holding R2 after any shot dramatically cuts the trajectory without losing power. Use that to correct a shot you've hit too hard, or to hammer past a keeper that's narrowed the angle.

Secondly, hitting R1 and R2 together just as you're receiving a high pass makes your player cushion-head or chest the ball down for a first-time shot

7 DEFENDING

The effectiveness of the X-button-press has now gone right down. The upshot is: no longer will you be hustling a player down until you push him over.

The press gets you close, but your tackling skill wins you the ball. Don't slide in until you get up close, though, and be quick to hit L1 to cycle to the next defender if you get beaten. Turning up semi-auto to the max in the player select option will help you along nicely



The other thing is to not run your players out of position. Chase a little, for sure, but click between your defenders. Simply running towards the ball with a defender you have left in a position is often enough to cut out ground passes or nick the ball off a striker's toe

5 CROSSING

Most players of Pro Evolution Soccer find themselves going through their whole career without ever hitting an L1 cross. Ringing any bells there? Pay attention and don't be one of them.

Holding down L1 automatically plays a ball towards the box wherever you are. This is perfect for hitting an-over-the-top from your own half, but also for centering balls at a slightly different height if you're crossing from the by-line. You can still double- and triple-tap circle passes with L1 held down

Holding down R2 while hitting any circle pass also gives the ball height. You can 'hang up' a long pass played down the line, helping your winger to catch it before it leaves play

PlayStation.2

It's time to look at rally driving in a different way. The sort of way that gives you the world's 21 best drivers, 7 teams, more than 100 stages all over the world, snow, dust, gravel, rain, mud, speed, heat, thrills, crashes, blowouts, burnouts, sweat, adrenalin and champagne. It's not always pretty. It's not always even the right way up. But it's the way it is.

uk.playstation.com www.wrc.com

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evolution studios

The only official game of the WRC FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PlayStation.2

THE UNPREDICTABLE PLACE THE EXHILARATION PLACE THE THIRD PLACE

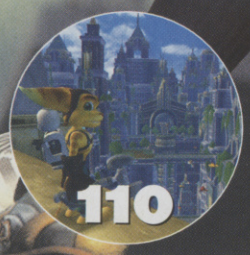
REVIEWS

THIS MONTH

Pro Evo 2 has tickled our office in a very special way this month. It has eaten up every spare second and threatened to make our mag run late. It also destroyed any hope of reconciliation with the boring corner of our floor, with whom we fell out after playing Britney's Dance Beat at full volume. Apparently our enthusiastic gamesplaying puts them off their spreadsheets.

CVG has been right behind the soccer sequel since we got our first version almost a year ago. We've not stopped playing through all the different incarnations of the code. That's how we can bring you the definitive review, the most useful tips outside a Premiership locker room AND two chances to win big prizes in our exclusive National PES2 Championship and PES2 Reader Challenge.

Lee Skittrell
Games Editor



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CVG SCORES

A great game is a great game, right? Yet some of you would be as pleased as a pooch with two choppers to spend weeks collecting dog tags in MGS2, but would rather eat poodle eggs than spend one minute on Final Fantasy X, and vice versa. That doesn't make one better than the other; they're just different genres for different tastes. It's why so many of us love games.

Which is where CVG comes in. We play the rubbish games so you don't have to. We review only the biggest, best or most significant releases of the month. And our scores are based on one key measure: fun. It's that simple.

Alex Simmons.
Editor

WHAT THE SCORES MEAN

1. Why, God, why?
2. Stinks. Never play this
3. A waste of your money
4. Maybe rent, never buy
5. Very average
6. Fairly solid but nowt special
7. Tasty
8. Quality game. Consider buying it
9. Class on a disc
10. An absolute must that defines the genre

CVG AWARDS

These accolades don't simply get dished out to games that get certain scores. They're CVG's way of telling you which are our pet hates and personal favourites.

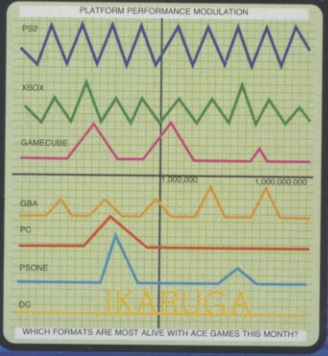
CVG ESSENTIAL
The most coveted award a game can get. It's worth buying the console to play the game

CVG RECOMMENDED
A damn good game. It may not break the mould, but it's a cut above the rest

CVG GAME OF THE MONTH
Doesn't have to be the highest scorer, but it's CVG's pick of the bunch this month

CVG STINKER
More abominable than a Yeti

FLATLINE



CVG TOP FIVES

Welcome to CVG's mini bible of the greatest games for the latest systems. Read and learn!

We've seen a lot of quality games in the quarter of a century since the debut of Space Invaders. Videogames' Hall of Fame is packed with undisputed classics of their time and format. But with gaming technology and players' expectations ever changing, what are today's best games? That's exactly what the lists below are there to tell you.

If you can't find any new releases that pickle your gherkin in this month's Reviews section, then check the games below – they're the very best games around right now for the formats in question.

And if you can't decide what new games system to buy, again, check the games below – if there aren't any on one particular format that you want to play, then simply choose another format.

Each issue we'll update our lists to include any new releases worth including, and no doubt every month some of you will be sufficiently outraged by our choices to write in and complain...

KEY

PS2 | XBOX | GBA | GC | PC | PS | DC | OTHER FORMAT | D DEVELOPER | P PUBLISHER | £ PRICE | I CVG ISSUE NO. | NP NO. PLAYERS | NEW ENTRY | B BUDGET GAME

PLAYSTATION 2

GRAND THEFT AUTO III
D DMA | P TAKE 2 | £ 39.99 | I 241 | NP 1
A violent, utterly amoral criminal masterpiece, following in the best tradition of videogames

METAL GEAR SOLID 2
D KONAMI | P KONAMI | £ 39.99/ | I 244 | NP 1
Cinematic stealth action elevated to an art form, just cut a tad too short though

GT3: A-SPEC
D POLYPHONY | P SONY | £ 20 | I 237 | NP 2
Quality handling and looks, plus it's a game that lasts longer than most real motors. Probably

NEW ENTRY

TIMESPLITTERS 2
D FREE RADICAL | P EIDOS | £ 44.99 | I 252 | NP 6
The finest first-person shooter yet on PS2. Fast, furious, fantastic-looking; answers critics of the original with a full magazine in the face

VF4
D SEGA AM2 | P SONY | £ 39.99 | I 246 | NP 2
Hidden depths make this fighter more a way of life than just a game. Even better than we first thought

XBOX

HALO
D BUNGIE | P MICROSOFT | £ 44.99 | I 242 | NP 16
Luscious looks, clever enemies and a neat storyline. Best console first-person shooter yet

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
D NEVERSOFT | P ACTIVISION | £ 44.99 | I 245 | NP 2
Improved trick system and environments. The definitive extreme sports experience

DEAD OR ALIVE 3
D TEAM NINJA | P MICROSOFT | £ 44.99 | I 243 | NP 4
Fantastic-looking fighter, a bit gimmicky, but nevertheless solid stuff for all standards of player

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING
D BIZARRE | P MICROSOFT | £ 44.99 | I 243 | NP 4
More accessible take on Dreamcast's seminal MSR, with added Ferrari-smashing goodness

AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING
D MICROSOFT | P MICROSOFT | £ 44.99 | I 242 | NP 4
Snowboarding sim with impressive freedom to roam and an innovative Career mode

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

GOLDEN SUN
D CAMELOT/NINTENDO | P NINTENDO | £ 29.99 | I 244 | NP 2
Polished role-player by any standards, all the more impressive on handheld. Incredible

ADVANCE WARS
D NINTENDO/INTELLIGENT SYS. | P NINTENDO | £ 29.99 | I 240 | NP 4
Stunning turn-based strategy game rammed with hidden bonuses. Still a CVG obsession

MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
D NINTENDO | P NINTENDO | £ 29.99 | I 239 | NP 4
Racer recapturing the brilliance of earlier outings, though with a few controversial tweaks here and there

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
D NINTENDO | P NINTENDO | £ 29.99 | I 244 | NP 4
More classic Mario magic given the GBA makeover, this time of the platform persuasion

SUPER GHOULS 'N GHOSTS
D CAPCOM | P CAPCOM | £ 34.99 | I 251 | NP 1
A stiffer challenge than Mario's playful platform scroller. Looks great too. Retro appeal is optional

GAMECUBE

SUPER MONKEY BALL
D AV/SEGA | P INFOGRAMES | £ 39.99 | I 246 | NP 4
Cute, hardcore, vertigo-inducing thumb-teaser with loads of modes and plenty of replayability

RESIDENT EVIL
D CAPCOM | P CAPCOM | £ 39.99 | I 250 | NP 1
The original Resident Evil adventure is stunningly updated. Your eyes won't believe the difference

PIKMIN
D NINTENDO | P NINTENDO | £ 39.99 | I 248 | NP 1
Imaginative action-strategy played against the clock, with touches of Miyamoto genius

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
D NINTENDO | P NINTENDO | £ 39.99 | I 251/2 | NP 1
The best platform adventure in the history of gaming bar none, AND it lasts for ages

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
D HAL LABORATORY | P NINTENDO | £ 39.99 | I 247 | NP 4
Painfully fast fighter or homage to all things Nintendo? Both, though a bit niche

PC

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT
D 2015 | P EA | £ 29.99 | I 243 | NP 32
Class scripting, enemy AI and the WWII setting make for a tense if plot-light FPS

CIVILIZATION III
D FIRAXIS | P INFOGRAMES | £ 29.99 | NP 1
Videogaming crack. Complex, formulaic but so immersive it can mess with your emotions

OPERATION FLASHPOINT
D BOHEMIA | P CODEMASTERS | £ 29.99 (GOLD EDITION) | I 236 | NP 16
Bit cack-looking but quality war sim that'd convert a hippy to the art of soldiering

SYSTEM SHOCK 2
D IRRATIONAL | P EA | £ 19.99 (COMPILATION) | B | I 216 | NP 1
Well-plotted role-player shooter adventure-cum-chiller with the atmosphere Deus Ex lacks

HALF-LIFE
D VALVE | P VIVENDI | I 206 | £ 9.99 | B | NP 16
Dated but still a byword for classy, story-driven shooters, better than many new releases – even today

PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION

This month: Shin Kanaoya of EA shares his top five of the moment

Shin Kanaoya, Localisation Producer of Harry Potter 2

BATTLEFIELD 1942 MULTIPLAYER DEMO (PC)
D EA | P EA | £ 34.99 UK
OUT: NOW | NP 64
"Since this was released, pretty much every other game has taken a back seat. It's even converted the Wolfenstein lot! Plus, you get to play as the Japanese..."

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE (GC)
D NINTENDO | P NINTENDO
£ 39.99 | NP 1
"The happiest game I've ever played. You just can't stop smiling when you're playing. When you're in the office late at night, it's nice to dip into – it's like a half-hour holiday."

VIRTUA TENNIS (DC)
D SEGA | P SEGA | £ 7 (APPROX) | NP 4
"I dug this out for research and since then, it's stayed on my desk. Intuitive gameplay with beautiful animations and a fantastic singleplayer mode. All it needs is some players like Borg and McEnroe."

WINNING ELEVEN 6 (PS2)
D KONAMI | P KONAMI
£ 69.99 | NP 8
"A fantastic football game, with bags of options and great multiplayer action. Some beautiful animations really bring you into the game. May have to get Pro Evo 2 for World Cup stats."

WARCRAFT 3 (PC)
D BLIZZARD | P VIVENDI
£ 39.99 | NP 16
"A fine sequel to the excellent Warcraft 2. It doesn't really break new ground but the presentation is faultless and the underlying gameplay is solid rather than inspired."

BEST IMPORT

ANIMAL CROSSING (GC)
D NINTENDO
P NINTENDO
£ 60 (IMPORT) UK RELEASE: TBC | NP: 1
Massive life game in real time, offering a complete virtual alternative life for up to 30 years (yikes!). Cutesy, addictive – but yet to get be confirmed for UK release. Boo.

CVG THE TEAM

This month's Fat Controllers on the reviewing gravy train

PICK OF THE KINGDOM HEARTS MOTLEY CREW									
WHO ARE YOU?	Jamie Sefton Freelance	Lee Skittrell Games Editor	Pete Walker Deputy Editor	Mike Cooper Writer	Jimmy Francis Writer	Alex Simmons Editor	Maura Sutton Freelance	Dean Scott Freelance	Johnny Minkley Freelance
PLAYING FOR PLEASURE?	■ Animal Crossing ■ Pro Evo Soccer 2 ■ Eternal Darkness	■ Harry Potter 2 ■ Blinx ■ Kingdom Hearts	■ Unreal Tournament 2003 ■ TimeSplitters 2 ■ Lord Of The Rings	■ TimeSplitters 2 ■ Animal Crossing ■ Ikaruga	■ Hitman 2 ■ Lord Of The Rings ■ Pro Evo Soccer 2	■ TimeSplitters 2 ■ Castlevania 2 ■ Pro Evo Soccer 2	■ Kingdom Hearts ■ Unreal Tournament 2003 ■ Blinx	■ Pro Evo Soccer 2 ■ Ikaruga ■ Mario Sunshine	■ Ikaruga ■ Yoshi's Island ■ Mario Sunshine
WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE WIZARD AND WHY?	*"Albus Dumbledore because he employed Professor Lupin, a dangerous werewolf, to teach kids at Hogwarts."*	*"That deaf, dumb, blind kid Tommy – the Pinball Wizard. Because he sure can play a mean pinball game."*	*"The Wizard Of Oz. Disguising yourself as an actor to inflict movie misery on millions is evil genius."*	*"The Wizard Of Speed And Time, because he can run faster than time. Duh."*	*"Gandalf because he's the only one that makes grey pointed hats look cool." So, not David Blaine then?*	*"It's gotta be David Copperfield, cos he copped a handful of Claudia Schiffer. Git."*	*"The Discworld Librarian. Because he's an organ-playing s. Which is quite unusual for a wizard."*	*"The Wizard from Gauntlet. 'Wizard... needs food badly'. 'Wizard... is about to die!'"*	*"I preferred him in his Dressed To Kill phase. Eh? Sorry, I thought you said Izzard."*

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2

The **beautiful game** just became **drop-dead gorgeous**

Lightly tap the shoot button to pump a low hard ball past the dozy keeper

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1-8**

COST: **£39.99**

PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**

OUT: **NOV.**

DEVELOPER: **KONAMI TYO, INC**

URL: **WWW.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM**

First off, let's get one thing straight. We may have given perfect scores to three games in the last couple of months – Mario Sunshine, TimeSplitters 2 and now Pro Evolution 2 – but this isn't because we've turned into soft girlies. On the contrary, we're tougher than ever. Problem is this trio of gaming titans is exceptional and refused to buckle under the weight of CVG's ruthlessly demanding high standards. Hard bastards!

But PES2 is the toughest of the bunch, having withstood months of torturously relentless play. And there's a damn good reason why it consumes unhealthy amounts of our time.

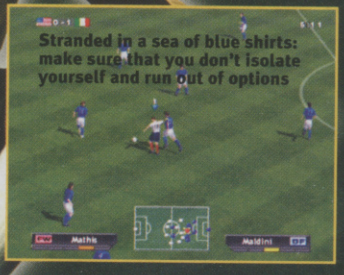
The on-pitch action is so tense, challenging, beautifully crafted and balanced that it's impossible not to fall under its addictive spell. Capturing the true spirit of football, PES2 is all about attitude, determination, skill and heart; it's simply the greatest footie game of all time.

Guard your plums! You can now manually defend against free kicks. Hit the square button to make your wall jump while the kicker is running up

Create space in the midfield with intelligent passes, then exploit any gaps in the defence

PRIMAL SCREAM

Tapping into your most primal instincts, Konami's masterpiece unleashes the beast inside you. A missed through-ball will make you grunt like an angry caveman, concede a goal and you'll howl with distress. Yes, PES2 succeeds in taking you on an emotional journey of amazing highs and painful lows. A feeling similar to watching England kick Argentina's ass



Stranded in a sea of blue shirts: make sure that you don't isolate yourself and run out of options

CVG GAME OF THE MONTH

LEARNING TRICKS THE HARD WAY

Hammer the UMBRO Pro Training Centre challenges in the newly modified Training mode to become a real hardcore all-rounder. However, even when you've completed all the challenges, you'll find yourself frequently returning to do them again and again, because they're actually extremely addictive mini-games – especially the free-kick target challenge. When you nail a bull's-eye, you can't help but glow with ridiculous self-pride.

1 *Dribbling: weave through the cones as fast as possible without knocking any over. A lot harder than it looks*

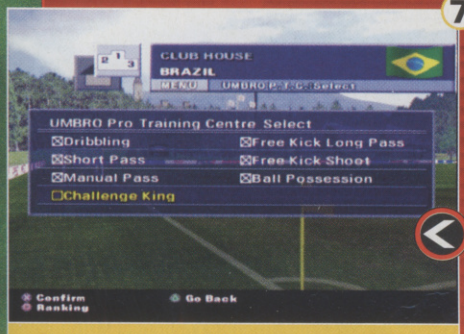
2 *Free Kick Long Pass: aim for the target, judge the power, and then fire off a long-range ball*

3 *Short Pass: select five players and string together as many passes as possible within 45 secs*

4 *Free Kick Shoot: bend it around the wall and aim for the bull's-eye. Get one in and... oh, what a feelin'*

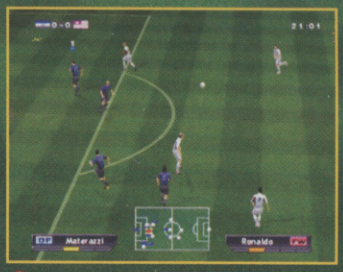
5 *Manual Pass: use the right analog stick to manually pass the ball to your AI team-mate*

6 *Ball Possession: play close and make passes near your opponent's goal to earn points*



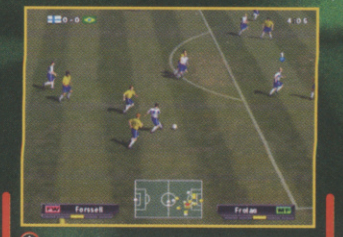
7 *Challenge King: do all challenges back to back in a bid to rack up a giant score. Only pros need apply*

"What's that, Mum? Tea's ready? Oh, **!?*" Blink and you'll miss it: Vieri twats in a bullet good and hard from 20-yards



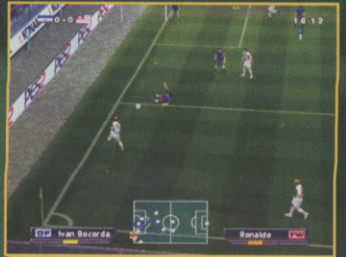
Run onto the lofted through-ball

Powerful shots on goal leave a thin white speed haze behind



Hunt for holes in the defence, then unleash a wicked through-ball

Every time you score you'll feel like whipping your shirt off. Or not?



Zidane whips in a blisteringly quick cross. Jobs a good 'un!

in monumental style then go out to Brazil so weakly in the World Cup quarters. You can't put a price on the sensation it causes. Well actually you can: £39.99. Bargain!

FAST AND FANCY FOOTWORK

The original Pro Evolution established itself as the finest footie game on PS2 and built up a massive allegiance of die-hard fans. Now this dynamite sequel nutmegs its predecessor with a flashy array of dazzling new tricks, tweaks and features.

Firstly, control. Players are now startlingly responsive, turning and switching direction faster and more explosively than before. Depending on ability and stats, most players possess impressively intricate dribbling skills and jinking expertise. Plus PES2's fantastic array of player animations means that every twist, turn and kick looks amazingly realistic and fluid.

In the previous game, if you were bombing along at full pelt it would take ages to slow down and skip around an opponent, making it almost impossible to keep possession at high speeds. However, now you can be sprinting down the wing with the R1 button held down, and then suddenly hit the R2 button and push the Dpad to whichever

direction you want to sidestep, swiftly jinking past your opponent. Have it!

Don't worry; PES2 hasn't turned into a dribble-intensive footie game filled with one-man Maradona-style wonder runs. The improved player control and dribbling finesse simply helps you hold onto the ball for those crucial extra seconds while you're trying to build up an attack on goal. Its still all about team play.

HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF

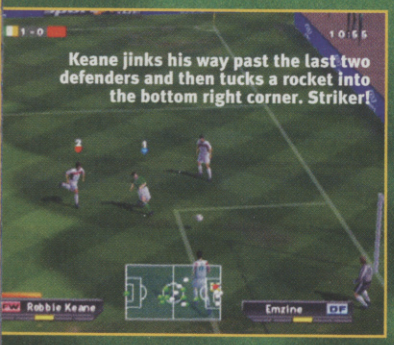
Masterminding intricate moves in and around your opponent's 18-yard box and scoring goals feels brilliantly challenging and rewarding. But whether you're playing against a mate or 11 AI players, penetrating the defence of any half-decent team and sinking one in their onion bag is rock 'ard. You have to think creatively, play skilfully, and be hungry for goals if you're going to break down the other team's back line.

The key to success is to build from the midfield and relentlessly attempt to outfox the other team with imaginative passes and unpredictable moves. But the beauty of PES2 is that you're equipped with all the freedom and flexibility you could dream of to pull off elaborate attacks on goal.

Anything's possible here. Nail amazing cross-pitch passes to switch the play, dart the ball around the box to break up the defence, drop in short and long crosses, or watch for the runners and stab through-balls between any gaps in at the back. Just keep mixing it up.

However, you'll have to possess mad skills to instinctively string together seamless and inventive attacks. See, the quality of a pass will now seriously affect how long it takes the receiving player to get the ball under control. Keeping possession is damn hard, because opponents are aggressive and super-fast, meaning that they can easily dart in and wrestle you off the ball.

Playing mates and computer teams will hone your abilities, but to really sharpen your skills, you'll have to enter the updated Training mode.



Keane jinks his way past the last two defenders and then tucks a rocket into the bottom right corner. Striker!

Goal keeper AI has been greatly improved for the PAL version of PS2

Bend it round the wall, but make sure you know whether your player is left- or right-footed to get the most curl

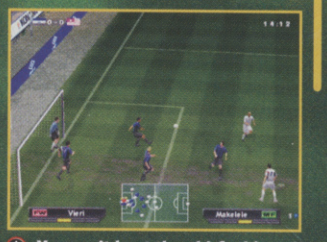
Any doubts as to whether you were offside are quickly cleared up in this new replay sequence

EARNING BECK'S CASH

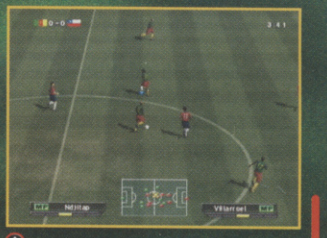
BETTER THAN / WORSE THAN

PRO EVOLUTION 2

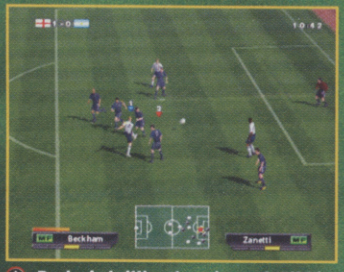
FIFA 2003



You can't beat the old-fashioned wallop as a defensive tactic



Keep an eye on the player radar to be aware of all your options



Becks is brilliantly animated. All his movements really are spot on

You can vastly improve every element of your game by taking up the all-new UMBRO Pro Training Centre training challenges. Dribbling, free kick, long pass, short pass, manual pass and ball possession tests are all on the agenda.

But they're not for the faint-hearted: try hitting a target in the goal from a series of five increasingly difficult free-kicks. And to complete a challenge you have to nail an amazing score to earn a place on the Rankings leader board. When you do, strut around proudly with Cantona-like arrogance because you da man!

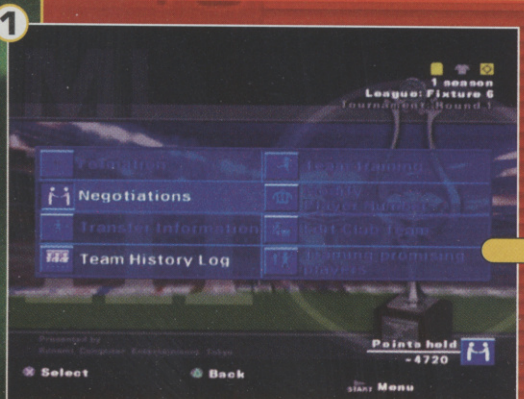
CUTTING KILLER DEALS

With all your new talents you can confidently enter the cool cup tournaments and leagues and unlock

NEGOTIATING THE PATH TO VICTORY

Don your big brown leather coat with the fleecy sheepskin lining and start puffing on a salami-sized cigar, because it's time to start managing your footie team and negotiating contracts in PES2's updated Master League.

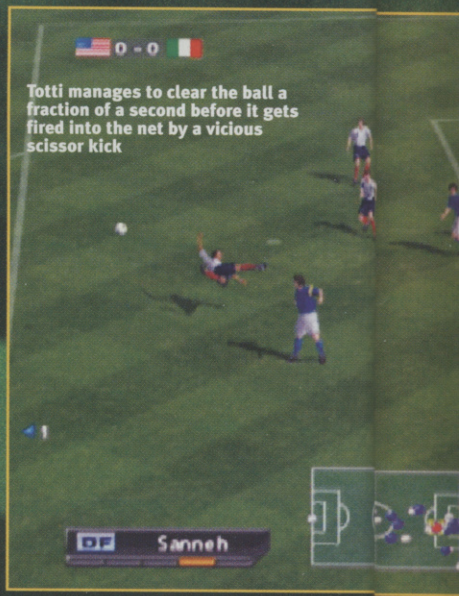
1



The new transfer system sees you negotiating and battling for players to come to your club

2

The original Master League was fairly one-dimensional. This new haggling element helps add more strategy



Totti manages to clear the ball a fraction of a second before it gets fired into the net by a vicious scissor kick

TRADEMARK SKILLS AND CELEBRATIONS

Most of the world's star footie players have been animated so that they move and play like their real-life counterparts and even perform some of their trademark goal celebrations when they score. You won't see Robbie Fowler doing his infamous routine of snorting the white lines off the pitch, though. Wonder why that didn't get in?

Robbie Keane gets out his finger pistols and peppers the crowd with 'bullets'. Bless

Becks sinks one then pulls off his famous starfish pose. What a man!

Ah, the 'brush back and blow dry' look. Make Beckham look like a '70s porn star. Posh would go mad

PES2's many secret teams. The structure and number of competitions hasn't changed since the original Pro Evolution, but the Master League has been tweaked and updated to give it even more depth.

There are now three divisions and the new negotiation feature adds a management element to the proceedings. Being able to negotiate wages, transfer fees and contract periods is sure to appeal to the more hardcore footie fan as the Master League is now less of an exact science, and if negotiations go belly up and you mismanage your funds, it's game over.

There's much more to think about, but that's exactly what you want.

The thing is, for all PES2's great new tweaks and features, what you care about most at the end of the day is how it feels to play. The ball physics are astoundingly realistic, and once you've got to grips with the controls, every move you make (every step you take) feels remarkably solid and intuitive.

In fact, it's virtually impossible to fault PES2's gameplay, except on the rare frustrating occasion when an AI team-mate doesn't run onto an obvious ball or intercept an easy pass. But these are forgivable flaws, because the rest of the action is so engrossingly fast, flowing, instinctive, emotionally charged and fun.

Hold down X to tug on an opponent's shirt. And hope the ref doesn't spot you

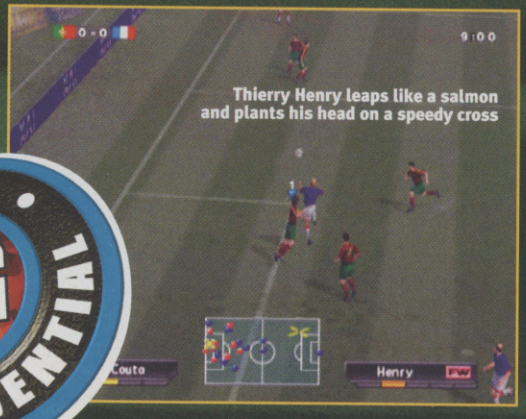
On the break: the quick counter-attack often leads to a goal. Stay sharp

NOT ENOUGH HOURS IN THE DAY

The proof is in the playing. Once you get into PES2 there's no turning back. It becomes a way of life and may well spend more time in your PS2 than any other game. Eat breakfast, play PES2... have lunch, play PES2... grab some dinner, play PES2... get up in the middle of the night when you need a wee, and play PES2. Erm, you get the picture... there just aren't enough hours in the day. So get ready to become addicted. CVG

Heskey hammers one in with his iron bonce. Thonk!

The further you get into the box, the more likely you'll sink one



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE GAMES ALEX RECKONS

The greatest football game ever? Probably. PES2 is slick, looks fantastic and towers over the competition thanks to its fluid gameplay. But here's where I'm gonna disagree with Mike – it's not perfect. The free-kicks still aren't great and the AI's a bit shaky sometimes, with players ball-watching rather than going in for the tackle. Still the best footie game you can get, though. **Alex** OPM

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE GAMES VERDICT

PES2 is the greatest football game ever, and the closest any sports title has come to gameplay perfection. There's simply no substitute. **Mike** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Totally addictive action
- Madly competitive
- Amazing player control and animation

- Occasional mild AI hiccups
- Only a few teams are officially licensed

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Smash Court Tennis (PS2)*
- *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002 (PS2)*

10 OUT OF TEN

CVG ESSENTIAL

STAR FOX ADVENTURES

Fox proves that he doesn't need an Arwing to kick ass

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £44.99
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
OUT: NOV. 22
DEVELOPER: RARE
URL: WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM

Peek-a-boo! There are tons of tiny secret tunnels and hidden areas to uncover

Thwack! The combat looks amazing

Find safety under your dome shield

Bang! Like a sledgehammer to the nose, it begins. You're straddling a pterodactyl, dodging humungous molten cannonballs shooting out of a bizarre vehicle that's half-airship, half-dinosaur. Then, once you've taken out the rear gunners, you have to deal with the ship's angry, rock-spitting figurehead and enormous propeller blades looking to chop you into fox mince.

Once this fast-paced, introductory set piece is over, you're into the main game, which takes place on foot and is far less action-packed in comparison. Luckily, though, that's only the case for the first few hours of the game. Phew.

Check under boulders for hidden treats

PICKING UP THE PACE

Star Fox Adventures is a real slow-burner to begin with. It takes a good two to three hours to really get into its stride, using this time to introduce you to the controls, your Staff weapon, the many cute characters that populate the story and your overall objectives. That's as well as letting you familiarise yourself with your surroundings, solve puzzles, haggle for goods in the Thorntail Store, and generally gawp at the Dinosaur Planet's delicious environments.

This snail-like start may dissuade some of you from taking the plunge into Rare's beautiful-looking quest. Well, don't let it because soon after this 'breaking-in' period the adventure quickly starts to gain momentum and open up, grabbing your attention. Right about the time you acquire a trusty sidekick.

THAT DID THE TRICK-Y

You make friends with an eager wee dinosaur called Tricky, who helps you on your quest. Using your own skills and abilities to solve puzzles only gets you so far. So, in order to progress, you frequently have to utilise Tricky's unique talents – which include the ability to hunt out secrets, dig through to hidden areas, and blow flames – by giving him commands.

With the little fella on your side you can unlock and access loads of new areas outside the main hub levels, where the majority of Star Fox Adventures' more intense and engaging action takes place.

SHOUTING LAVA, LAVA, LAVA!

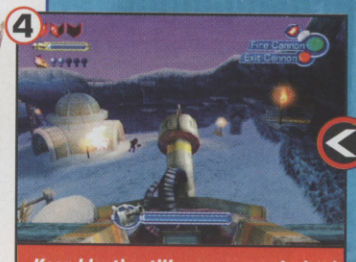
You step into the DarkIce Mines. A thin path of rock weaves across a wide bubbling lava lake, and you attempt to negotiate the twisty walkway. There's a gap in the path, so you jump but come up short and find yourself dangling from the edge. Then, having

DINO-SIZED SCENARIOS

SFA is at its best when it's throwing you into grand-scale, kooky set pieces, comprising quirky puzzles, dazzling-looking action and surprises. And you'll be glad to hear that there are plenty of these scenarios to sink your teeth into – once you've ploughed through the slow beginning.

Feed him and he'll give you a lift

Bash through the fortress gates



Keep blasting till every enemy's dead

Storm in and head for the cannon

Stringing together a load of flashy attack combos is dead easy

Don't get too close or he'll twat you with his ornate Staff

pulled yourself up, you continue, only to find the rock crumbling beneath your feet. You make a dash for it and somehow manage to stumble onto solid ground. But before you have time to think, you find yourself having to prove your strength in a fight against loads of club-wielding SharpClaw goons.

But don't go relaxing now! Once that mini ordeal's over, it's time to dodge some runaway boulders, solve a puzzle to unshackle a woolly mammoth, break into a fortress and obliterate some more bad guys with a cannon. That's more like it. And the good news is that there's much more of this sort of action as you progress further into the game.

OUR MONEY'S ON THE FOX

Although the fighting in SFA looks amazing, Fox McCloud spinning and striking his attackers like some sort of kung fu master, the actual combat system is very basic.

If you're surrounded by numerous enemies, you auto-lock onto the one you're facing and usually hammering the A button will dispose of them.

Pointing the analog stick in different directions and using Fox's roll while you're fighting will cause him to pull off different moves. But on the whole, good old-fashioned button-bashing is all that's really required.

Which is a bit annoying, as it sucks the skill out of being in combat. Nonetheless, the fluid and flamboyant nature of the action helps relieve the mild frustration of knowing you're probably going to come out of most fights only mildly scathed.

GET OVER IT!

This weak combat system and the initial slow pace of the adventure are SFA's two biggest flaws. But if you can forgive, or at least accept, them, you're in store for a beautiful, gigantic and charming journey.

ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME
BETTER THAN
STAR FOX ADVENTURES
WORSE THAN
ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

As you'd expect from the creators of Banjo Kazooie, Star Fox Adventures is full of quirky little touches: you'll be riding dinosaurs, racing hover bikes, searching under boulders for treats by using your Staff as a lever, and warping to new areas by standing on the hand of a giant rock man.

That's in addition to weaving your Arwing through mad mazes of giant asteroids while blasting up enemy ships, collecting power-ups, and darting through golden rings. You can't help but be drawn even further into the experience as a result.

SFA isn't the Zelda-like classic we all hoped and prayed it would be. However, it's still a big, bold and beautiful enough game to demand the attention of true adventure fans. CVG

The poor stone giant. He's only half the man he used to be

Tricky melts a thick ice wall with his fearsome curry breath

Fox almost slips to a fiery death

Take to the skies in your Arwing, and engage in mad aerial combat

Whoa! Every single environment in Star Fox Adventures looks good enough to eat. Yummy yum-yum

CVG VERDICT

Star Fox Adventures does take a while to get into gear. But once it does, it'll carry you away on a gorgeous adventure, full of quirky touches. ***Mike*** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

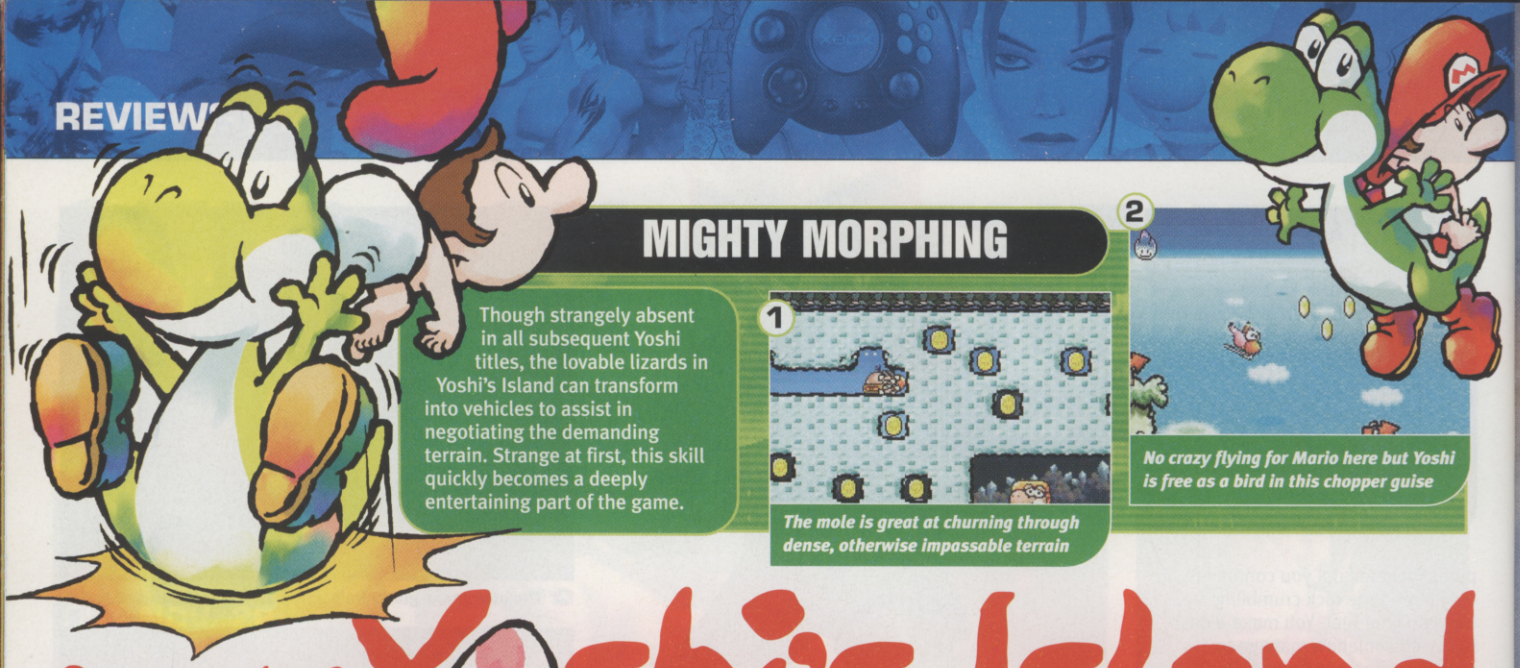
- Gorgeous visuals and environments
- Cool, quirky gameplay
- Loads for your cash

- Takes a few hours to get going
- Far too easy to beat enemies

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Final Fantasy X (PS2)*
- *Zelda: Ocarina Of Time (N64)*

8
OUT OF TEN



MIGHTY MORPHING

Though strangely absent in all subsequent Yoshi titles, the lovable lizards in Yoshi's Island can transform into vehicles to assist in negotiating the demanding terrain. Strange at first, this skill quickly becomes a deeply entertaining part of the game.

The mole is great at churning through dense, otherwise impassable terrain

No crazy flying for Mario here but Yoshi is free as a bird in this chopper guise

Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island

A classic slice of **platforming genius** finds a **new home**

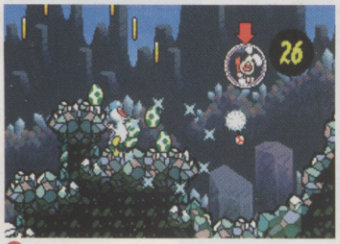
GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: OCT. 11
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
OUT: £29.99
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
URL: WWW.NINTENDO.COM

Super Mario World was – is – genius. No one who experienced the joy of Miyamoto's seminal work seriously expected him to take 2D gaming any further. And then there was Yoshi's Island.

Gamers will argue until the end of time over whether Yoshi's Island is better than Super Mario World, but that's not important. All you need to know is that Super Mario Advance 3 is the best Mario game on GBA, possibly even the best *game* on GBA, and a title you simply must own.

Quick, Yoshi! Grab all those coins, you scaly little fool!



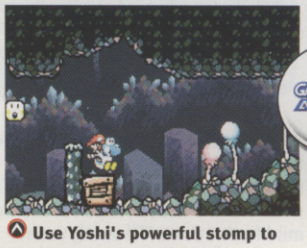
Grab baby Mario before he's captured by Bowser's evil minions

DIFFERENT STROKES

Though billed originally as a sequel 'proper' to Mario World, Yoshi's Island is, as you will no doubt discover, a very different beast. With Mario just a wee nipper in the game, Yoshi takes centre stage, bringing a range of new moves with him. Egg-firing is one, a crucial skill that's performed by following a rotating cursor and timing release.

Far cooler than this, though, is Yoshi's unique ability to morph into different vehicles, changing into a mole machine to cut through the environment or a helicopter to take to the skies with ease.

Yoshi's Island is populated by some truly fearsome bosses

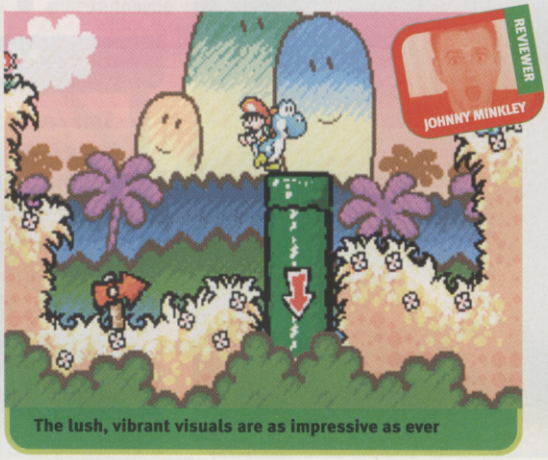


Use Yoshi's powerful stomp to smash the crate wide open

Look familiar? These rooms are just like the ones in Mario Advance 1

However, a rock-solid game mechanic is a pre-requisite for any Mario title; where Yoshi's Island *really* shines is in the astonishingly well-designed levels with their almost embarrassing array of inspired touches and memorable set pieces. Plus, it's a larger and far more challenging title than the fabled Super Mario World.

In relation to the original SNES version, Yoshi on GBA is a near-perfect port with every last detail reproduced with great love and attention. And mercifully, whereas SMW was 'dumbed down' for its GBA release, Yoshi's Island retains the tough yet satisfying level of difficulty of the original. CVG



The lush, vibrant visuals are as impressive as ever

VERDICT

A practically perfect port of one of the greatest games ever created. Don't even entertain the idea of not buying it – you have been warned. ***Johnny*** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Near perfect copy of SNES classic
- Arguably greatest 2D platformer of all time
- Same old Mario Bros. extra as before: weak
- Um, there really isn't anything else

9
OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

■ *Mario Advance 2: Super Mario World (GBA)* ■ *Sonic Advance (GBA)*

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and the Chamber of Secrets

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MORTAL COMBAT

The real-time battles are fast and furious with multiple enemies

Fighting alongside Donald Duck and Goofy is a truly surreal experience

Combat in Kingdom Hearts is in real time in contrast to the usual turn-based antics of Final Fantasy games. Sora fights a lot like Link in the Zelda series, although he whacks enemies over the head with a magic Keyblade, rather than a sword.

As well as physical attacks, you can use magic and summoning

KINGDOM HEARTS

Cartoon + RPG giants = huge technicolour **cute 'em up**

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1**

COST: **£39.99**

PUBLISHER: **SONY**

OUT: **NOV. 22**

DEVELOPER: **SQUARE**

URL: **WWW.SQUARESOFT.COM**

You know those mad dreams you have when you've stayed up playing Final Fantasy until four in the morning? Hands still gripping an imaginary controller, you lie in bed casting phantom spells and conjuring up all sorts of strange gaming scenarios in your head. Like, how about a Final Fantasy game featuring all the coolest Disney characters? Wouldn't that be just the most bizarre concept ever? Then you wake up and find that it's actually happened. Score.

The Cheshire Cat seems to enjoy making you feel nervous

TWO HEARTS ARE BETTER THAN ONE...

So here it is. Proof that some gaming dreams do come true. The combination of two unique fantasy factories, both of which excel in weaving magical tales. While Square's gaming credentials are unquestionable, Disney games are usually aimed at a younger crowd, tending to offer few challenges.

What a relief, then, to find that both sides in this fairytale union have stuck to their own particular areas of excellence. The gameplay style will be very familiar to Final Fantasy fans, while Disney's unique brushstrokes have helped create the astounding worlds, each of which plays like a mini Disney movie.

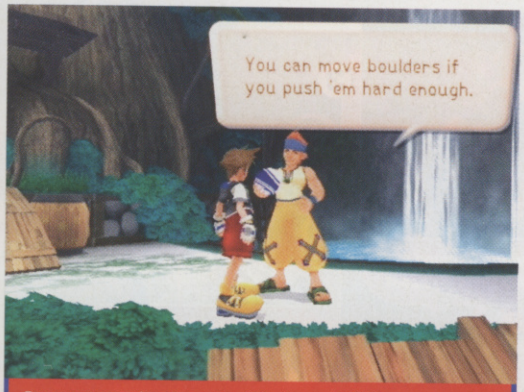
Link hands with your Disney buddies to activate the Trinity marks

WHERE'S MICKEY?

The story starts with a 14-year-old boy called Sora whose happy existence alongside some mini-me versions of famous Final Fantasy characters such as Selphie and Tidus is shattered when the evil Heartless wreak havoc on Destiny

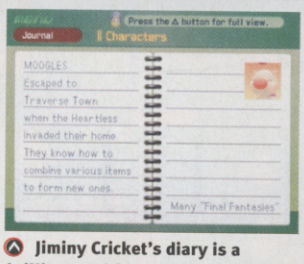
Traverse Town is the main hub, where you'll even find some helpful Moogles

Donald Duck kicks his fare share of Heartless butt but it's Goofy who emerges as the stronger fighter



Do you recognise these familiar faces? With so many popping up, it can all become very confusing

Alice's Wonderland looks exactly like you remember it from the Disney cartoon, Queen of Hearts 'n' all



Jiminy Cricket's diary is a brilliant tool for collating game info

The game features more platform elements than a typical role-player

BOO, HISS

Nobody makes scarier villains than Disney, as anyone who hid behind their quivering ice cream cone during Snow White will testify. All the most heinous villains are guaranteed to pop up at some point in the game, as well as some brand-new, big, bad bosses. Prepare to be scared.

Don't be fooled by the pretty scenery and lack of blood – the boss battles are long and really quite violent

The evil Heartless minions are actually controlled by a cabal of top Disney villains

Islands. Meanwhile, somewhere in a parallel Disney universe, King Mickey Mouse has vanished and his friends Donald and Goofy have set out to try to find him. The two parties team up to stop the Heartless from stealing famous princesses of the Heart, such as Alice in Wonderland.

PRACTICAL MAGIC

While there are some platform aspects to the gameplay, such as a breakneck slide around the jungle with Tarzan, most of the gameplay is very role-player-orientated. The shops, spells, items and potions are very similar, sometimes identical to those found in Final Fantasy games, but thankfully the magic system is very simple in comparison to the horrors of Junctioning.

What makes Kingdom Hearts so special is the way in which each Disney kingdom that Sora, Goofy and Donald visit is so distinctively reminiscent of the classic film it represents. You're full of expectation each time you arrive in a new world as you discover which beloved movie you're about to become a part of.

The gameplay is even skewed to compliment the themes of each Disney kingdom. In Wonderland it's slightly bizarre and more puzzle driven, while Deep Jungle is more physical, with lots of rope-swinging antics alongside Tarzan. And for those who might be put off by the apparently childlike themes, don't forget that Disney occasionally dabbles with darkness too.

While Kingdom Hearts is never going to tread the same bloodied boards as Resident Evil or Silent Hill, some of Disney and Square's darkest villains are given free rein, from the evil Queen in Snow White to the Dark Mages from Final Fantasy IX. There's even a whole world devoted to Tim Burton's twisted tour de force The Nightmare Before Christmas.

The gameplay is complicated enough to negate all talk of Kingdom Hearts being a game for tiny tots only, although it's admittedly less challenging than the usual Final Fantasy saga. Overall, it's a successful experiment, so let's hope for many more instalments in the future.

Expect lots of FF-style lovey-dovey stuff

Flying on the Gummi ship is the most boring bit

FINAL FANTASY X
KINGDOM HEARTS
LUIGI'S MANSION

The shops are very similar to those in FF – with duckling triplets

VERDICT

A delightful mixture of two enchanted worlds. It may be mere fluff if you thrive on guts 'n' gore, but what beautiful, magical fluff it is. **Maura**

GOOD VS BAD

- Disney and Square humour combined
- Jiminy Cricket's Diary
- Exquisite environments
- Too cute for some
- Tedious Gummi ship building
- Confusing at times

8
OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Final Fantasy X (PS2)*
- *Super Mario Sunshine (GC)*

COMBO COMPLEX

Combat can sometimes be a bit heavy on the button-bashing, but there are combos available if you want to learn them. Maia can shape-shift into demon form for slow but powerful attacking, and each hero has his or her own specific skills to use like ranged weapons and magic. Let's fight!

Brave knight Taugril gets stuck into the vicious mud monsters

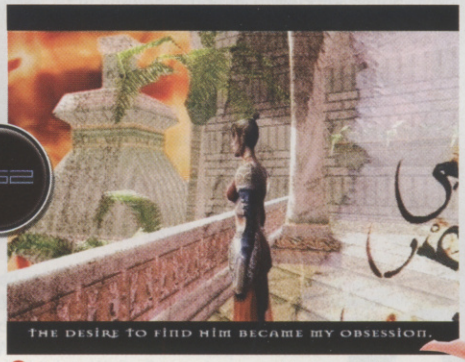
Maia explodes in a puddle of blood as she transforms into her summon beast

Sangaril is fairly weak, but good at fast attacks and stealth kills

Summoner 2

She may be a **lady**, but she can **fight like a lion**

Interact with an object if there's a hand above her head



The cutscenes are gorgeous and help propel the story

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: THQ
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: VOLITION
URL: WWW.SUMMONER2.COM

Don't be offended, but you're a queen. No really, in Summoner 2 you play as Maia, the Queen of Halassar. Happily tea-drinking and corgi-cosseting are scarce in this adventure – Maia thankfully has more in common with Lara than with our dear old Elizabeth R.

The game slams you into the middle of an epic story, and the gaps are filled in for you as you play. It's an approach that's sometimes frustrating, but it's worth it in the end for the way the plot weaves itself around your actions.

STATS, STRATEGY, SWORDS!

The game combines fast-paced exploration, story-driven action and insane rucks with the enemies of the Halassar empire. Maia recruits new heroes throughout the quest and each of these is independently controllable. You'll need to spend a lot of time carefully watching their energy bars – you must heal characters before they peg it. Each fighter's individual progress needs to be monitored carefully, too, as you level up.

The mixture of strategy, adventuring and battles really works. Only a reliance on beardy-weirdy names and the occasional repetitive nature of the fights mar this otherwise first-rate role-player. If you liked FFX and fancy more of the same but with real-time battles, this'll have you stroking your pointy hat with glee.

She's got a mean pout and frown – don't mess with this queen

Maia's palace looks lush but the courtiers are dead stuffy

Maia uses special fire attacks as her team dies around her

VERDICT

An engrossing, challenging and action-packed adventure. And, if you're a stats freak, there's plenty of that kinda stuff to muck about with too. **Lee**

GOOD VS BAD

- Epic, well-told story
- Massive on-screen battles
- Great 'summon' beasts

- Fights get samey
- Easy to get lost
- Slightly clumsy inventory set-up

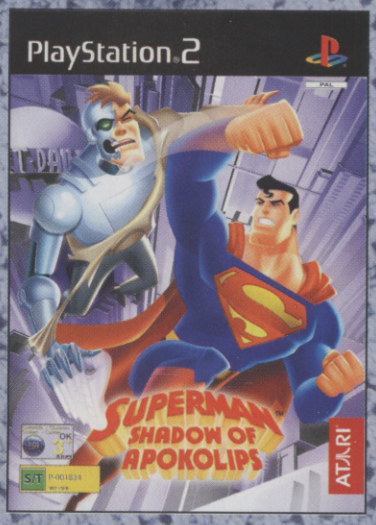
IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Final Fantasy X (PS2)*
- *Lost Kingdoms (GC)*

8
OUT OF TEN

WARNING: WHEN THE GAME TURNS OFF, SO DO YOUR POWERS.

You cannot fly. You are not *stronger than a locomotive* or *faster than a speeding bullet*. You have no business attempting to use superpowers outside the realm of *Superman: Shadow of Apokolips*. Any attempt to do so will undoubtedly result in broken legs, arms, fingers and toes, sprained ankles, bruised ribs and egos, loss of limbs, pride, and ultimately-life. Just remember sport, when the game turns off, so do your powers.



PlayStation 2

ATARI

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FORMULA ONE 2002

Enjoy the ride, but only if you love F1

Why do guys like us watch Formula One Racing? We admit it: we're not bothered with the horsepower of an F1 Ferrari, the amazing driving ability of Michael Schumacher or the rules of electronic driving assistance. We want to see cars crashing into piles of tyres at 200mph!

If it's a game with insane pile-ups you're after, buy Burnout 2, because you won't find any here. However, simulation fans could be onto a good thing, as like most F1 games, this a sim through and through. All the driver statistics and tracks are up to date and, as usual, the cars are difficult to control.

"But these are among the most powerful cars in the world – they're *supposed* to be hard to control!" we shout as we watch the Aussie GP at 3am. Well, if that's you, too, you'll love this. But everyone else will prefer something more fun. CVG

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: SONY
OUT: NOV. 1
DEVELOPER: SONY
URL: WWW.SCEE.COM

Schumacher has won! Never!

The driver models look quite good, but you don't see them much

Those pesky window cleaners just won't take no for an answer

Corner approaches are tricky

In the thick of the action. This is about as exciting as it gets

CVG VERDICT

It's got everything a serious Formula One lover could want, but if you're simply after a straight-up fun ride, this isn't likely to please you. Jimmy CVG

GOOD VS BAD
- All the drivers
- All the cars
- All the stats
- Difficult car-handling
- Graphics a bit dull
- Too serious

6 OUT OF TEN

ROCKY

Puts up an heroic fight

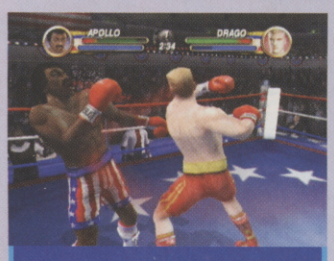
Recreating Rocky's class cinematic boxing scenes was never going to be very easy in a videogame, but the boys at Rage have had a pretty good go.

Here you get to follow The Italian Stallion's path to heavyweight boxing success, starting as the clueless bruiser in Rocky I all the way through to the experienced pugilist from Rocky IV.

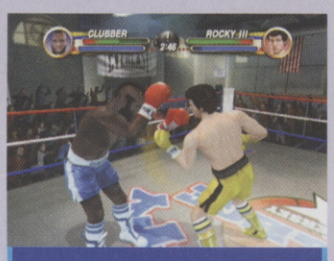
To play, it's like most other boxing games – the fighting system is basic and very different from the Tekkens of this world. Although there are combos to master and punches to throw, there's your fighter's stamina to consider. Miss too many punches and he'll get tired, leaving you prone to a counterattack. Thing is, you still cannot help but mash the buttons which, while unlikely to win you the championship, does have surprisingly effective results. Good, but not essential. CVG

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: RAGE
OUT: OCT. 18
DEVELOPER: RAGE
URL: WWW.ROCKYTHEGAME.COM

Recreate your favourite Rocky moments. Ours is when he knocks out Drago



You can stop Apollo getting killed!



Next up: when Mr T met Sly...

Use the sparring mode to practise

CVG VERDICT

It's an enjoyable enough effort, but lacks responsiveness and hurts your forearm too much to be a truly great game. Jimmy CVG

GOOD VS BAD
- Play as Rocky
- Feels like the films
- Nice sound effects
- Sluggish controls
- Graphics not great
- Crowds look bland

7 OUT OF TEN

SUB REBELLION

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: METRO 3D
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: IREM SOFTWARE
URL: WWW.METRO3D.COM

Sub Rebellion is an underwater blaster that's a throwback to the classic shooters of old. Controlling your death machine through dark, sparsely-populated levels is relatively easy, but the controls feel clumsy in the thick of the action. The missions are pretty bland too, with nothing to shift the fun factor out of first gear. Do yourself a favour and avoid this floater.

4 OUT OF TEN

SILENT HILL 2: INNER FEARS

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £44.99
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: KONAMI
URL: WWW.KONAMI.COM

XBOX

Where Res Evil is all schlock-horror and OTT gore, Silent Hill 2 is about the unseen, the unknown – with a smattering of psycho-sexual weirdness to boot. This Xbox version is essentially the same as the PS2 hit, but with an extra four-hour mission to beef out some of the story. As dark and disturbing as ever, but not worth getting if you've played it on PS2.

Maria strikes a pose

It's short but scary

8 OUT OF TEN

SSX TRICKY

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: EA
OUT: NOV. 1
DEVELOPER: EA
URL: WWW.EASPORTS.COM

Despite being much diddier than its next-gen buddies, GBA does a great job of recreating the snazzy snowboarding larks of SSX Tricky. Almost all the tricks from the console games are in there and the controls work brilliantly despite not being analog. The downside is that the racing is quite slow and that different sections of the courses repeat themselves. But it's still GBA's best snowboarder by far. It'll last too.

Collect snowflakes for points!

8 OUT OF TEN

EXPERIENCE A WORLD UNLIKE ANY OTHER!

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THE TIMESTONE PIRATES

Take a journey around 5 huge levels in this Jump'n'Run Action Adventure!

Battle against 4 gargantuan Dino bosses and a monstrous prehistoric fish!

Fly a Skybax, ride a dino and pilot a submarine and save Waterfall City!

Beautiful graphics inspired by the books created by James Gurney!

WWW.VISITDINOTOPIA.COM

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FIFA FOOTBALL 2003

Insert an **abusive-but-not-really-justified** football chant here

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: **1-8**
COST: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **EA**
OUT: **NOV.1**
DEVELOPER: **EA**
URL: **WWW.EA.COM**

Ask yourself: why are you even reading this? You know FIFA Football's not as good as Pro Evo 2. That scores a ten, and this doesn't. It doesn't because it's nowhere near as rewarding a game, and nowhere near as true to the sport of football. So that's that then. Point and laugh if you must, but buy Pro Evo 2.

That's the bottom line, but there's a lot in FIFA 2003 that makes you realise that even Pro Evo is massively deficient in some areas. Take real player names, kits, team badges... stuff like that. Prolonged Pro Evo play makes you think these things aren't important. Revisiting this year's FIFA might change your mind. Pro Evo might feel like football, but you can't deny the meaningless kits and team names hammer the authenticity.

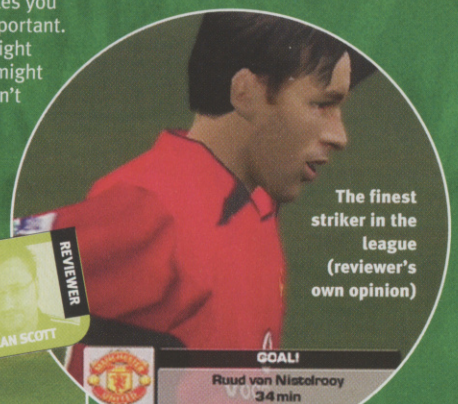
Authenticity is FIFA's strong suit. Play Man U versus Arsenal at Old Trafford, and you get a real sense of atmosphere. The important players are exactly like the real people. Kits are bang on. The stadium's amazing. Pro Evo feels like you're playing football, but this makes you think you're taking part in a specific match. It creates a different kind of buzz to Pro Evo, but a buzz nonetheless.

There's always an appropriately atmospheric build-up to each match

The game monitors your ability, and offers advice to suit

The throw-in system is the most flexible that we've seen

You can't customise camera angles this time. Pick from fixed ones



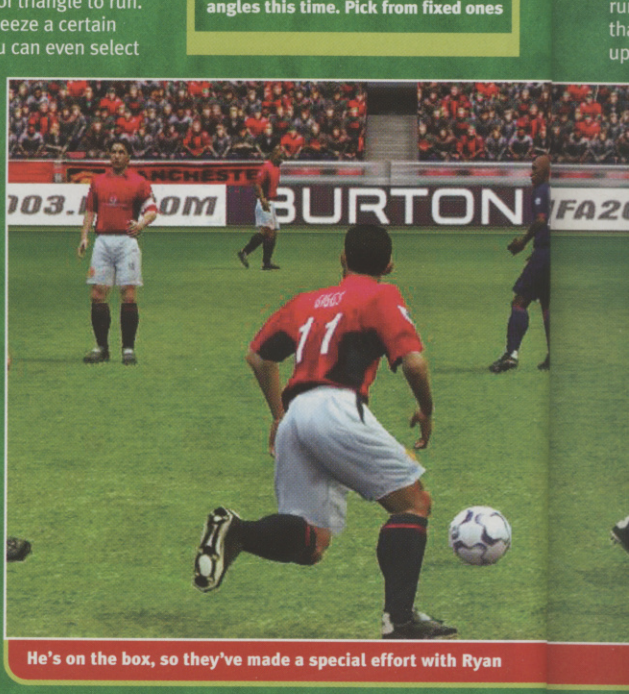
Brazil's defenders will regret this...

NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING (AT ALL)

Don't kid yourself these things are not important, because they are. Consider this: where's the virtue in having all the drawing power of the next-gen consoles but still having players that are as vague as the tiny footballer sprites of ten years ago?

The perfect footie game would combine Pro Evo and FIFA, and this evidently isn't lost on EA: for the first time in the series' history, there's a real Evolution influence. Gone is the farcical hammering of triangle to run. Now you simply squeeze a certain shoulder button. You can even select 'Action' or 'Simulation' gameplay. And the cheap skill moves on the other shoulder buttons? Gone too.

But before you get all excited, the ball still moves



He's on the box, so they've made a special effort with Ryan

DOWN ON THE SUBS BENCH

This being a FIFA game, just about every games console under the sun gets a look-in. The PS2, GameCube, PC and Xbox versions are all fundamentally the same. There will be a GBA version in the near future, and even Psone gets a look in. Aw, bless.

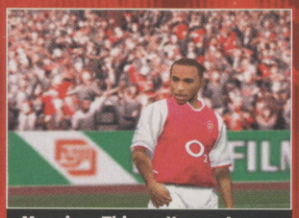
PSone version. Players looks like they're made out of porridge

Xbox version. More colourful than PS2, but graphics are less sharp

IDENTIFICATION, PLEASE

The biggest problem in any footie game is David bloody Beckham. You do a great job reproducing England's most famous footballer, then he goes and changes his haircut and makes you look a chump. Remember Mohawk Becks in Pro Evo? Bad. Here, EA's risked the blond look staying a while...

Beckham in FIFA 2003. Impressive (at the time of writing, mind)


Monsieur Thierry Henry. A popular chap in Eindhoven

There's a small problem with the Heskey likeness: he scored

like it's got ball bearings rattling around inside. Cross-field passes wobble in the air, ground passes seem almost randomly paced and shots can go so quickly they've come back off the keeper before you're fully aware you've shot. The dribbling's a bit off too, but FIFA responds with – no word of a lie – a PASSING game.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2 — BETTER THAN — FIFA 2003 — WORSE THAN — THE LAST ONE

BALLS OF IRON

You can flick the ball around nicely, and the dotted-line passing that was a bad centrepiece in the previous two versions is a more comfortable fit. Tap L1 and players break off you and make runs forward. There's no button for that in Pro Evo 2. You can be powering upfield with Keano or Viera with Giggs and Ljungberg just watching you. You *will* them to break. They don't.

All of which adds up to the first decent FIFA game in years, and one you might not instantly vomit over at the prospect of playing with your mate. Him being more taken with seeing Ryan Giggs on the box rather than some meaningless torso. If FIFA carries on copying and Pro Evo keeps ignoring reality, this contest could get closer next season. CVG

Stick it up your arse! Or something...

Crossing is a bit random. The ball spends a long time in the air

CVG VERDICT

Brilliant likenesses and authentic presentation. Gameplay doesn't live up to these standards, but it's still the best FIFA since the cartridge versions. **Dean** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Amazing presentation
- Controls copy the ones in Pro Evo
- Cheap tricks binned
- Choppy ball movement
- Too easy to score
- Players skate around

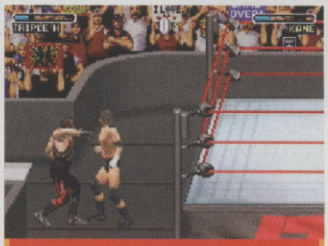
7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Pro Evolution Soccer 2 (PS2)*
- *NHL 2003 (all formats)*

WWE ROAD TO WRESTLEMANIA X8

Mini wrestling madness

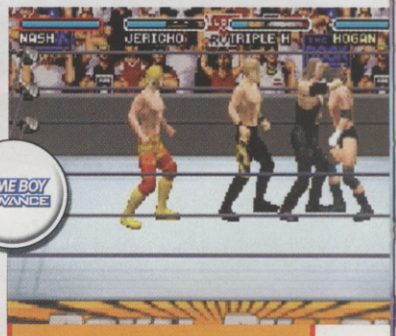

Kane sticks it to Triple H for talkin' trash about his momma

Get a four-player tag team match going and you'll have a ball

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: THQ
OUT: OCT. 25
DEVELOPER: THQ
URL: WWW.THQ.COM

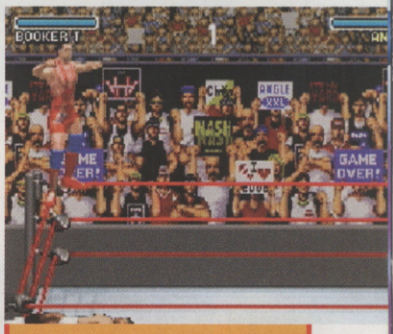
GAME BOY ADVANCE



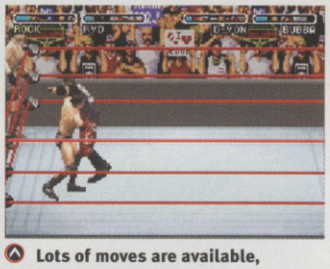
Royal Rumble in full effect!

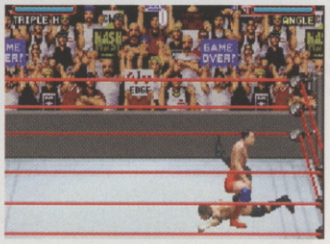
The Rock is the undisputed star of the WWE. He's got movie deals and millions of dollars in the bank, but he still has to get up in the morning, douse himself in talcum powder, and slip on a pair of rubber pants so tight it would make most grown men weep.

Luckily, this new wrestling game, with its long-winded name, isn't quite as restrictive as the aforementioned garment. The GBA buttons have been put to full use, and there is a surprising number of moves to pull off. Besides, it's really funny to just throw your character to the canvas and watch him flounder.



Kurt Angle gets ready to drop the bomb on Booker T


Lots of moves are available, including 'grab by the nads and crush'


Taking a dump on your opponent is a legal move in this version

Although the Pay-Per-View mode is limited, there are loads of other game modes, and most of the well-oiled stars are here too. Add to that a manic four-player mode and some good graphics, and you've got some solid handheld grappling action. CVG

CVG VERDICT

Although not as deep as its GameCube counterpart, it has plenty of play modes, loads of your favourite stars and is an all-round blast. **Jimmy** CVG

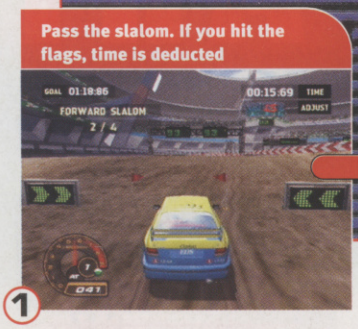
GOOD VS BAD

- Lots of moves
- Good graphics
- Great multiplayer
- Only for WWE fans
- AI becomes dodgy in places

8 OUT OF TEN

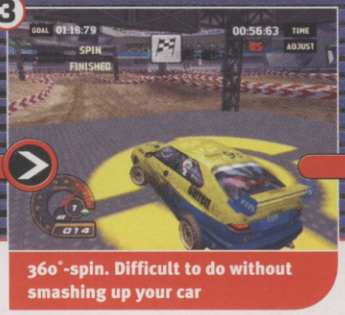
WHAT A CHALLENGE!

The hard-to-rival Gran Turismo set the precedent for tests in racing games. Now Rally Fusion has taken up the gauntlet, following the trend with circuits that are a little more fun (not to mention easier) than the ones in the daddy of racers.



1 Pass the slalom. If you hit the flags, time is deducted

2 Forward parking. Not as easy as it sounds: lots of potential for time loss



3 360°-spin. Difficult to do without smashing up your car

4 Reverse parking. Definitely the hardest manoeuvre of the bunch

RALLY FUSION: RACE OF CHAMPIONS

Arcade or sim? Er... both?

Fancy a bit of rubber-burning excitement in the sunshine? Well, Rally Fusion's selling point is its association with the Race Of Champions in the balmy Canary Islands, where the cream of rally talent gathers annually. Poor sods.

The ROC game mode sees you race against a competitor on weaving parallel tracks. On top of that, you get the usual timed rally stages, plus head-to-head modes that include hill climbs and Follow The Leader, where you have a health bar that depletes as you fall behind. Tense players are eliminated until only one car remains and is crowned the winner.

COULD DO BETTER

Unfortunately, of all the modes on offer, ROC is actually the weakest.

Ouch! Hit the wall too often, and you'll be retired early

There's little variety in racing around the same parallel tracks, even if you do so in increasingly high-powered cars. You mostly can't even see your competitor. This may make a good spectator sport, but not a fun game. Luckily, though, there's loads of other stuff for you to unlock and it's this sheer number and variety of game modes that keep you interested.

The graphics, the only element that differs across the formats (PS2 version reviewed), show touches of real class. The snowy tracks have shiny dimples of ice that only show when the sun hits them at the right angle, and there are some excellent rain and fog effects on the Inca levels.

Despite the odd interruption, most of the desert tracks are pretty bare

But it's Fusion's apparent identity crisis that stops it being a really great game. The handling of the cars is sufficiently difficult that, at first, you think it's a simulation, but after a while you'll wish the cars were a bit looser. The fun of rally games is the feeling that you're only just managing to tame a slobbering 300bhp beast. Here, the cars are almost docile.

The actual Race of Champions itself is a little disappointing

Although the AI is very human-like, Rally Fusion's races just aren't as nerve-racking as the glitzy, high-tempo Shox or the grittily realistic rally stages of GT3. Other games, such as Sega Rally, attained the right balance between sim and arcade – Rally Fusion doesn't quite do it.

TOCA RACE DRIVER (worse than)
RALLY FUSION (better than)
FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 4
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
OUT: NOV 15
DEVELOPER: CLIMAX BRIGHTON
URL: WWW.ACTIVISION.CO.UK

Push your mates off the road, then do an evil laugh. "HAHAHAHA!"

The rain effects on Inca are great. The game's grittiest track

VERDICT

Rally Fusion is a decent enough game that's fun to play, but there is very little that allows it to carve a niche in the competitive racing genre. ***Jimmy***

GOOD VS BAD

- Nice graphical touches
- Loads to unlock
- Some well laid-out tracks

- Races aren't exciting enough
- Unbalanced gameplay
- No outstanding features

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Shox (PS2)*
- *Colin McRae Rally 3 (PS2)*

7
OUT OF TEN

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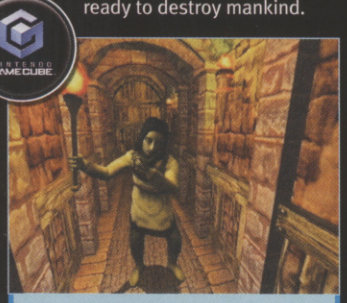
CROSS OVER TO THE DIGITAL WORLD.

ETERNAL DARKNESS™

Has this **new scary tale** got that **Nintendo (dark) magic?**

First with Res Evil and now Eternal Darkness, the big 'N' is continuing its campaign to convince gamers its their newest console isn't all bright colours and sunshine – that the GameCube has a dark side.

Drawing inspiration from classic gothic supernatural horror, Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem is a hugely entertaining adventure that leads you into a disturbing alternative world where ancient monsters are being awoken, ready to destroy mankind.



The jaundiced, sunken-eye look was particularly in that season

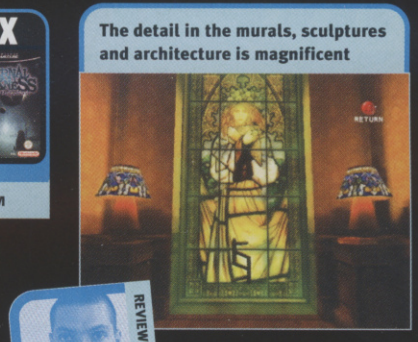
GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
OUT: NOV. 1
DEVELOPER: SILICON KNIGHTS
URL: WWW.SILICONKNIGHTS.COM

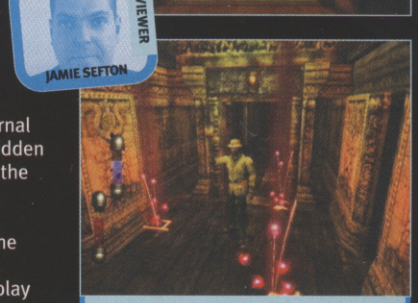
TOME RAIDER

You play the central part of the adventure in modern-day USA as Alexandra Roivas, a Lara Croft-alike trying to discover the secret of her grandfather's grisly death. Alex begins to search the Roivas mansion for clues and stumbles across the Tome of Eternal Darkness, a book containing a hidden history of powerful 'magick' and the ongoing battle against a race of terrifying undead creatures.

As Alex finds chapters from the book scattered around her grandfather's house, you get to play one of 12 different characters from the past, each linked by fate to the Tome. These include the monk Paul Luther, trapped in a strange French cathedral at the time of the Spanish Inquisition in 1485, and Dr Edwin Lindsay, an explorer who, in 1985, discovers more than just treasures in an Asian temple.



The detail in the murals, sculptures and architecture is magnificent



The voices you hear when you cast spells send shivers down the spine

Having several main characters is a great gaming device; Silicon Knights has succeeded in weaving a coherent and enthralling multi-branching storyline through time.

MONSTER, MONSTER

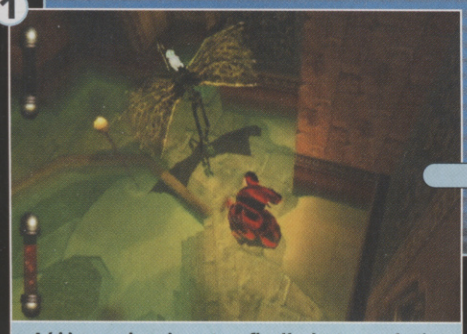
The analog stick controls characters and each has his or her own distinctive, historically-accurate weapons with which to attack, such as swords, guns, crossbows and torches. Enemies include the easily-combustible Xel'lotath Zombie, a skeletal monster called a Bonethief that wears the skins of its victims, and huge, hulking, three-eyed beasts with flesh-tearing teeth and claws, known as Horrors.

The combat system requires you to hold the R button, then use the control stick to choose the part of the creature you wish to attack. Once

MAD AS A BALLOON!

The Sanity Meter is one of the game's most original aspects – get ready to hallucinate! Some of the hallucinations even play tricks on you, the player, so you should try to make sure you keep sane...

1



A hideous winged creature finally destroys what's left of your character's grip on reality – the Sanity Meter is completely empty

2

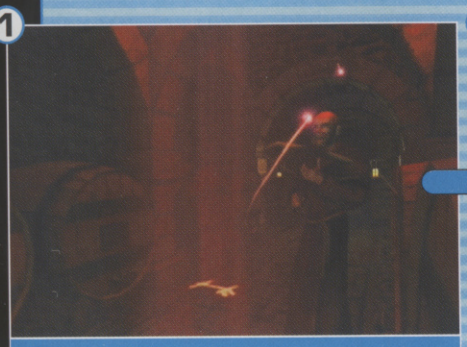
You escape and make it to a ladder leading to another room. But as you enter this chamber, your head suddenly falls off!

3

There's a flash of light and you're back to just before you entered the room. "This can't be happening!", your character wails in despair...

NOW THAT'S MAGICK!

Once you get to a certain level of magic to rival even the mighty Paul Daniels, you can use your skills in conjunction with your run-of-the-mill weaponry. Here's how to defeat a nasty three-eyed Horror in Amiens cathedral, France, using monk-boy Paul Luther.



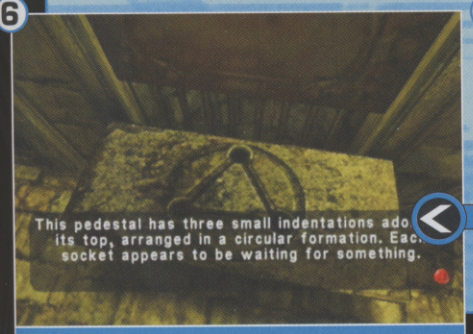
1. *First cast a Shield spell to protect your character. That's the spinning red sparks above his head*

2. *When the monster appears, cast a Damage Field to keep him at bay and protect yourself even more*

3. *Keep loading your weapon (a crossbow in this case), aiming at the creature's head and firing*

4. *The Horror bashes into the Field, causing itself damage. When the Field wears out, run away*

5. *Finish off the beastie with more shots to the head and collect the valuable item – a blue gemstone*



6. *Place the gem in a hole in the pedestal. Now get the two other gems to open the secret passage!*

your character retrieves the Tome from a terrifying alternative dimension at the beginning of each episode, you also get access to the powerful, dark magic arts.

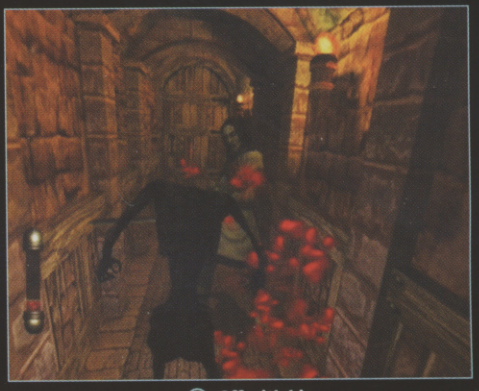
A RUNE WITH A VIEW

As you progress, you discover more Runes, the building blocks of magic, which you can arrange in a special Circle of Power to make different spells. They perform many functions such as healing, creating a shield, revealing hidden doors and objects, enchanting weapons to make them more powerful and even summoning the undead to help you.

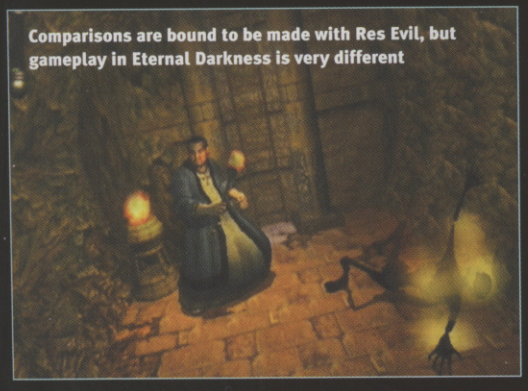
Three kinds of magic are available and each battles the other. Choosing the right kind of spells in battle is very important, giving you heaps of options and a generous amount of gameplay depth.

Another major innovation is the Sanity Meter, showing your character's state of mind. When you encounter monsters, you lose sanity, which can only be replaced by using magic or by performing a 'Finish Him' death move. If you really start to go mad, you start seeing bizarre hallucinations that can include your character turning into a zombie or shrinking to a few inches high. It's another gaming element that makes Eternal Darkness unique.

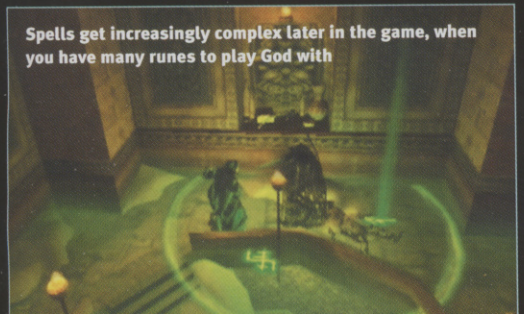
The detailed, real-time 3D graphics are much more dynamic than the static backdrops of Resident Evil, and the excellent cutscenes have some of the best voice acting in a videogame. The Dolby Pro Logic II surround sound is also superbly atmospheric. Get the picture yet? Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem is frighteningly good. CVG



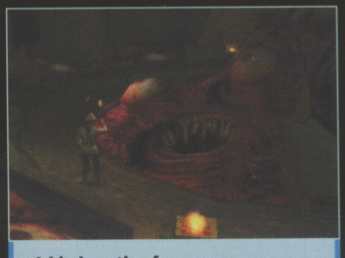
Off with his head! The game isn't over-gory, but there is a healthy spattering of blood and guts



Comparisons are bound to be made with Res Evil, but gameplay in Eternal Darkness is very different



Spells get increasingly complex later in the game, when you have many runes to play God with



A big beastie of an enemy – now *where* did I put my weapon?

VERDICT

A highly original third-person adventure with genuine jump-off-the-sofa scares, neat gameplay innovations and a superb, eerie atmosphere. ***Jamie*** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Cracking graphics
- Sanity Meter and 'magick' are cool
- Ace playable characters
- Combat is tricky
- Puzzles are contrived
- Story sometimes gets confusing

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Resident Evil (GC)*
- *Silent Hill (PS2)*

9
OUT OF TEN

RED FACTION II

Get **frisky** with a diet of frantic, futuristic **fragging fun**

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: THQ
OUT: NOV. 15
DEVELOPER: VOLITION
URL: WWW.REDFACTION2.COM

With the recent release of the awesome TimeSplitters 2, it's a pity that THQ didn't hold onto Red Faction II a tad longer. No doubt it will be overlooked by many gamers who buy TS2 – and frankly, they'll be losing out.

This class first-person shooter is set in the 22nd century, a time when the 'Commonwealth' no longer conjures up images of British sprinters pulling up in agony. This now describes a collection of states run by the repressive Sopot, at war with the neighbouring United Republic in pursuit of unification.

But Sopot's top 'nano-boosted super soldiers' have turned on him and decided to replace the evil dictator who is the cause of the world's distress. This is where you come in: as demolition expert Alias, you must create maximum carnage in the pursuit of utopia.

The subway level: loads of enemies – and some civilians – to kill

These pesky spiders can sap your energy levels in no time

That used to be a person. Now it's fit to hang in a butcher's window

Like all good first-person shooters, Red Faction has night vision

Looks like an industiral area in East London – but it's not

TIMESPLITTERS 2
RED FACTION 2 (BETTER THAN / WORSE THAN)
AGENT UNDER FIRE

You don't just have to worry about enemies on the ground

FAST AND FURIOUS

This game drops you into the thick of the action – you hardly have time to think before missiles and bullets are blasting in your direction. The first level is short and simple – blow up a few things here, kill a couple of enemy troops there, and that's it.

But as you progress, you'll realise that this is more like a PC frag 'em up than your usual PS2 shooter. The later missions are huge, divided into sub-levels that are broken up only by the occasional autosave.

Enemies vary from robotic spiders to humans, and they will all evade your fire, group up and flank you in

DROPPED IN IT

The first level sets you down in some deep doo-doo. Pumped full of testosterone and ready to roll, you are dropped into hell with only a gun and some grenades for company. You must gain access to the nano-technology which drives you and your squad members, and do a lotta killing on the way. It's the highest-tempo level in the game and the perfect introduction to the mayhem to follow...

1

Clear the area of enemy scum. Blow out the towers fast to fulfil your objectives

2

Wait for your buddies to blow out the warehouse door, then you can storm the building

3

Make your way through the ventilation shafts to reach a new area and more victims

4

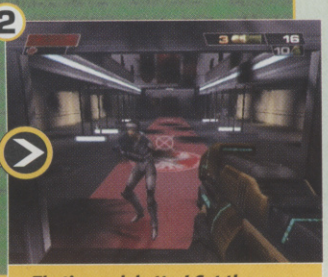
Blow out pipes and nano-

the co grab t techno

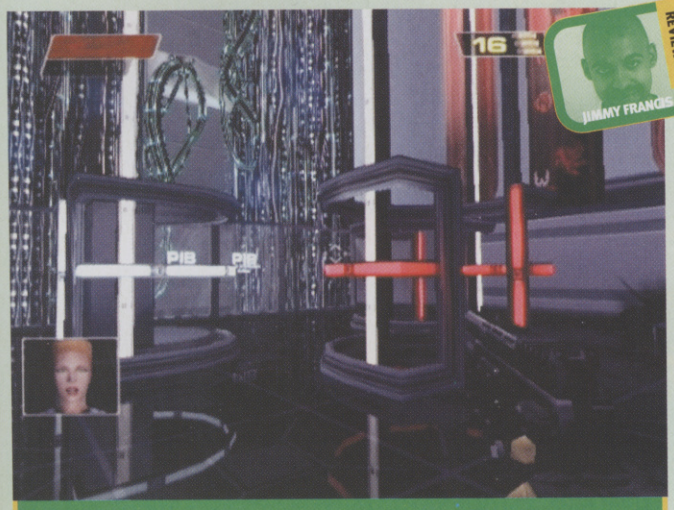
CHANGING ROOMS

Fancy a bit of home improvement? Due to the huge number of explosions in the game, you can enter a room that looks beautiful, and leave it in a state that will make the cleaners fume.

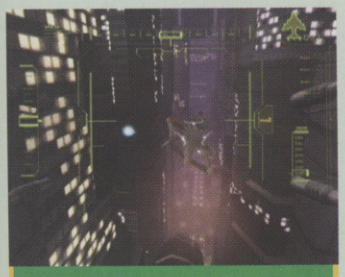
No Llewellyn-Bowen frills in here, but it has a nice modern style



That's much better! Cut the room down to the bare essentials



The levels filled with more light can look beautiful



The level when you're a gunner in a jet is particularly good

the hope of seeing your wounded body floundering in the gutter.

It's a shame then that many of the levels look so bland. We were hoping for a dark apocalypic future where there's a surprise around every corner, but in truth only a handful really shine.

The multiplayer mode lets the game down slightly too. The frame-rate is smooth and the graphics quite impressive, but it's not quite as fast or comprehensive as TimeSplitters 2.

VERDICT

A big, challenging game with some excellent levels. Although the multiplayer isn't amazing, you'll miss out if you brush RFII aside. ***Jimmy***

GOOD VS BAD

- Huge, varied levels
- Massive, noisy explosions
- Good AI
- Occasionally bland graphics
- Multiplayer's a bit on the slow side

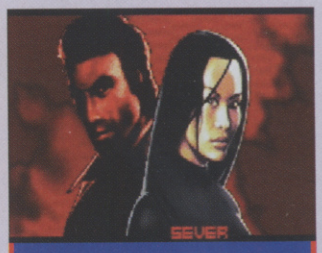
8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *TimeSplitters 2 (PS2)*
- *Halo (Xbox)*

the coolant grab the technology

Sink to your knees NOW, you evil terrorist scum!



Doesn't look an awful lot like Lucy Liu, does it?

ECKS VS. SEVER: BALLISTIC

The unlikely pair return

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: BAM!
OUT: NOV. 1
DEVELOPER: CRAWFISH
URL: WWW.BAM4FUN.COM/GAMES/BALLISTIC

This courtyard looks good, except for the 'water'

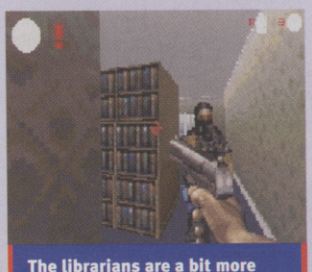
Ballistic is the sequel to a Game Boy Advance title, which was based on a film – that has only just been released. Phew! Well, we're confused: are you?

The film Ecks Vs. Sever was released in the US cinemas last month, and stars the lovely Lucy Liu. Don't get too excited about that, though: you won't be seeing much of her assets in this game, because it's a first-person shooter where she's one of the playable characters.

An exclamation mark will pop up when you're in danger

The Battersea Dogs Home level, complete with friendly mutt... or not

The graphics look pretty good and enemy AI is advanced for the GBA. But that doesn't matter much: the important thing is, it's a shooter for your GBA that works. Don't go in expecting Halo but lap up the handheld blasting action.



The librarians are a bit more militant than your usual ones

VERDICT

A great shooter on handheld: this is an impressive feat for the Game Boy Advance. Basic, but great fun all the same. ***Jimmy***

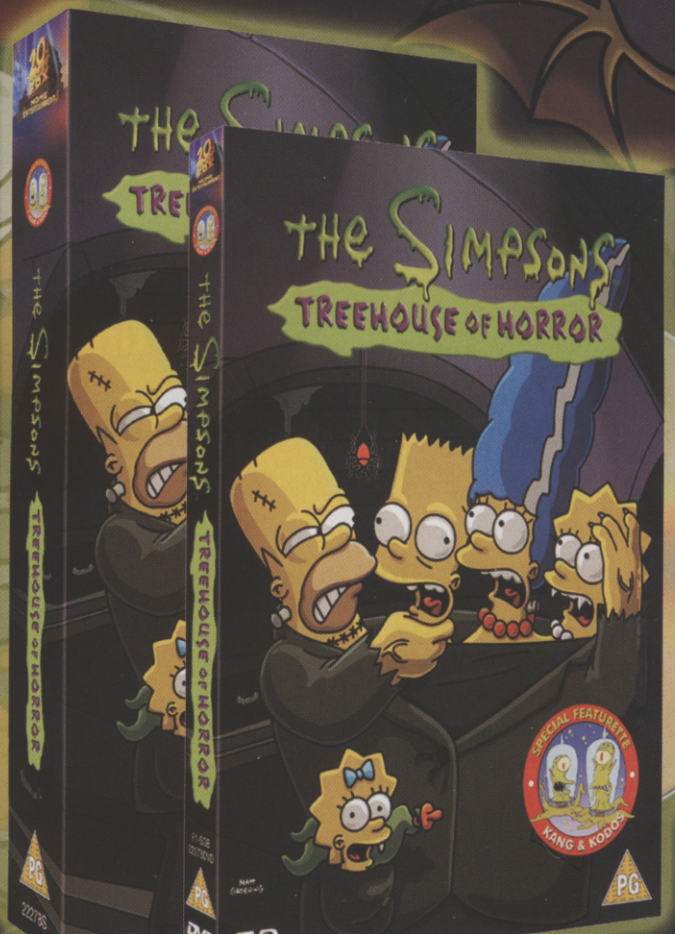
GOOD VS BAD

- Cool 3D visuals
- Fun to play
- Loads of enemies
- Simple level layout
- Quite easy
- Not enough Lucy Liu

7 OUT OF TEN

THE SIMPSONS™

TREEHOUSE OF HORROR



4 Spooktacular episodes!

MATT GROENING

POSSESS IT ON VIDEO & DVD VIDEO™ FROM 28TH OCTOBER AT V.SHOP

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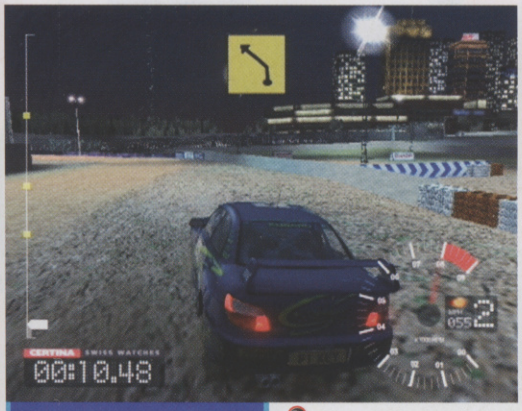


In the Special Stages you are pitted against other cars and have the chance to pick up bonuses

Powerslides feel spot on

Ah, a grubby-looking block of flats. You may not be surprised to find this is one of the UK stages

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

Two years on and McRae's still hot

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
OUT: OCT. 25
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS
URL: WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM

You have to wonder about the sanity of Colin McRae, belting around narrow mountain ledges at insane speeds in a rallying wet-dream worth more than your average Lotto jackpot. If there's a screw loose inside McRae's 300bph Ford Focus, it's got nothing to do with the service crew. Which was probably why so many of us loved mashing our fingers to the bone pretending to be McRae in his first two laps of the videogaming circuit.

McRae 3 is, of course, the distinguished racer's first next-gen outing, and so fans of the series are expecting something special. Thankfully, Codies has indeed pulled off a driving simulation worthy of a World Rally Championship winner. Even if that win was way back in 1995, eh, Colin? Still, at least his videogames have improved over the years.

BURN RUBBER, CHURN DIRT

The handling is a little looser and initially harder, but is just as satisfying as before once you get to grips with it. Each track becomes a rollercoaster ride, with your car sliding from one corner to the next on a wave of mesmerising momentum sustained by pure rallying skills. Well, until you fender-bender a tree, anyway.

To be the best, though, you'll have to master both the handling of at least one of the dozen or so cars on offer, and also learn what mods to make before starting each country's stages to maximise that vehicle's performance.

The motors themselves boast unbelievable detail plus an impressively realistic damage system, and, although Gran Turismo freaks may moan about everything else looking bland, the sparse placing of trackside objects feels entirely appropriate. If you're racing down dirt tracks in the outback, you wouldn't expect to speed past a neon-lit funfair with screaming kids, would you?

Shame about the cardboard cut-out spectators, though. If you're playing McRae 3 on Xbox, you'll notice a slight graphical improvement over PS2, but core gameplay's essentially the same.

Sound throughout is excellent, and the grinding and thumping as you career across rough ground makes you wince; and when you've had enough of screaming directions to yourself, grab some mates because there's a solid multiplayer experience to be had too.

In short, McRae 3 is one polished game, and though it may not appeal to die-hard arcade racer maniacs, the rest of us can sit back and enjoy the ride.

Info about approaching corners is vital

TAKE YOUR PICK

If you're coming to McRae 3 having not played any of the series' previous games, the handling of the cars could be daunting. But choose your car carefully, and you'll be driving like a pro in no time.

SUBARU IMPREZA WRX (445)

Poor acceleration but excellent handling. Best for beginners

Two-wheel-drive car, similar to the Subaru, but more powerful

CITROEN XSARA KIT CAR

MITSUBISHI LANCER EVO VII

Good all-round car, but heavy and slightly slower as a result

FORD FOCUS RS WRC 02

The daddy. Powerful and stable but hard for beginners to control

DEEP DOWN AND DIRTY

The excellent damage and 'filth' systems in Colin McRae Rally 3 mean you can start a race with a pristine, straight-outta-the-factory car – and end up with a hunk of dusty, rusting junk.

Lovely! You can almost smell the plastic of the faux-walnut

But after dusty Ghardhiki, it's looking the worse for wear

GAMES VERDICT

Serious gaming with a healthy dose of fun. McRae 3 continues the series with the flair fans are used to. Phew, we can all sleep easy now. ***Jimmy***

GOOD VS BAD

- Amazing-looking cars
- Excellent sound
- Serious, fun gameplay
- Good multiplayer

- Not for die-hard arcade racers
- Spectator animations look crap

9
OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec (PS2)*
- *TOCA Race Driver (PS2)*

BLINX 2 THE TIME SWEEPER

Originality sets the Xbox back on track

Sonic co-creator Naoto Ohshima seems to have done it again: he's created Blinx, one of the most original platform titles to come along in ages... *and* it's an Xbox exclusive. Bet that will have narked some of his former mentors at Sega.

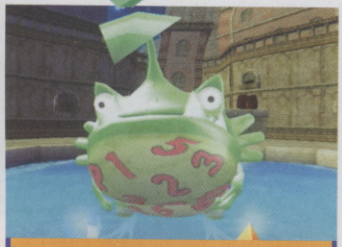
Our feline hero Blinx lives in a parallel world where cats roam around on two legs and produce time crystals that make up the universe. If production stops, we literally run out of time.

Our little kitty is a time-janitor who must clean up all the pesky monsters that appear after a time-fabric distortion occurs. So when a gang of terrorist pigs start to steal crystals, putting world B1Q64 in jeopardy, it's down to Blinx to save the day. It's a mighty good thing he's as brave as a lion. Roar!

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
OUT: NOV. 8
DEVELOPER: ARTOON
URL: WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/XBOX

The water reflections in this level are simply gorgeous



Learn while you play with the maths-teacher boss. Or not

The graphics, although not cel-shaded, have a brilliant cartoon style

PUZZLED PUSSY

The platform game that ensues is big on puzzles. Blinx sucks up special icons with his Time Sweeper, a Luigi's Mansion-style vacuum cleaner, and once he's collected enough, his furry paws can manipulate time at will (although he can only hold three time controls at once).

By recording your every move during a level, the Xbox can do things that no other console could. For instance, if an essential bridge has fallen down, you can hit rewind to watch it de-collapse in front of your eyes. Or maybe, if there are two switches that need to be pressed down at once, record yourself pushing down the first one, then play back the ghost while you click the other one into place.

It's cool time-distorting stuff and although some of the early

This Venice-style level looks so Italian, you can smell the ciabatta

MAD SKILLZ

Time is, unsurprisingly, the most important element in the game. You have five skills at your disposal: rewind, fast forward, pause, record and slow-mo, that allow you to mess with the clock and complete puzzles that will test your brain to breaking point.

1 *REWIND: Turn back the clock to rewind events that have occurred around you*

2 *FAST FORWARD: Speed it all up and get yourself to the level exit quickly*

3 *PAUSE: Stop everything in its tracks, and get to new areas previously cut off*

4 *RECORD: Record yourself and play it back to see two Blinxes in tandem*

5 *SLOW-MO: Slow everything down. Excellent for killing several enemies at once*

Thwack! Spit out a steel barrel at one of the spacehopper-like baddies

Collect enough of these big cat tokens to get secret bonuses

When you die, the game rewinds to just before you were killed

puzzles seem to be blatantly obvious, they become increasingly testing as the game develops.

SUCK IT AND SEE

The multi-functioning sucking machine also sucks up objects and spits them back at enemies. You'll almost burst with joy from chucking a barrel at a little blob, or a bomb into the mouth of one of the game's more interesting enemies later in the game.

But you won't find gooey ectoplasm all over the walls because, from the tinny music to the sweet characters, this game is as cute as can be. Sometimes the sappiness grates, but the overall presentation is top-notch – the worlds are small but beautiful, with the tilted lines of the old Warner Bros. cartoons.

There are some minor problems, though. Our feline friend is so slow he looks as though he's walking on ice. This is okay on later levels, where there's a denser puzzle structure, but when you *have* to replay levels to get extra items, you'll want to stamp on his hairy tail.

Another gripe is over the camera, which can be very annoying, restricting your view and making some puzzles unnecessarily difficult.

Despite these foibles, Blinx is a game that every Xbox owner should get. There's so little variety on the console that when a game this original comes along, you should grab it with both paws – despite its occasional flaws. CVG

BETTER THAN SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
BLINX
WORSE THAN SCOOBY DOO!

CVG VERDICT

This title is original, wicked fun and with lots to unlock it should keep you interested for ages. We can't wait to see how the series develops. ***Jimmy*** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Brilliantly original
- Good graphics
- Loads of puzzles to keep you busy
- Sometimes gets a bit too cute
- Annoying music
- Some puzzles too easy

8
OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Super Mario Sunshine (GC)*
- *Jak And Daxter (PS2)*

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKALIPS

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £44.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: NOV.15
DEVELOPER: SHEFFIELD HOUSE
URL: WWW.INFOGRAMES.CO.UK

The Man of Steel may possess many talents, but unfortunately they don't run to starring in great videogames. This effort is better than most, but the missions are simplistic and nothing to get excited about and the cel-shaded graphics bland, though glitch-free. Thankfully, the controls are straightforward, but that's about as good as it gets, really. CVG

Supes uses his laser-eyes to blast some cyborg scum

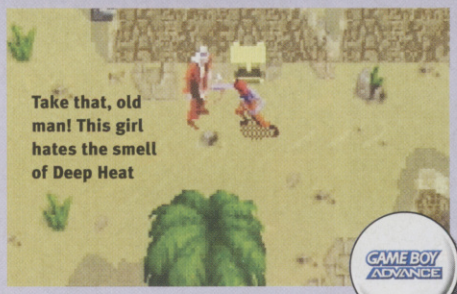
It seems that he isn't the only one with lasers, though

6
OUT OF TEN

THE MUMMY

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT
URL: WWW.UBI.COM/UK

Treasure chests, ancient dungeons and a top-down view. Sound familiar? Pre-N64 Zelda players will experience déjà vu. Maybe it's admirable that the developers have made a game that pays homage to role-players of that era but the three usable characters and simple controls don't disguise the ease of the puzzles. All over too quickly. CVG



Take that, old man! This girl hates the smell of Deep Heat

GAME BOY ADVANCE

5
OUT OF TEN

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: RED STORM
URL: WWW.UBI.COM/UK

The second Tom Clancy-based game this month is an addictive, top-down action game that looks as good as anything on the GBA. Following the story of the film, you lead the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team as they try to infiltrate a TV station that's been taken over by terrorists. Pick the members of your assault team or play one of the limited number of missions with your mates via the link cable. Either way, it's good fun. CVG

It's not quite Charlie's Angels

7
OUT OF TEN

DIGIMON WORLD 2003

Tedious battles for fans only

The intro's quite exciting – and very misleading

Choose your tactics well, or there'll be trouble

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £19.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: NOV. 8
DEVELOPER: BANDAI
URL: WWW.INFOGRAMES.CO.UK

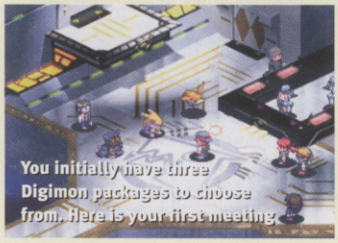
PSone

You'll find your first couple of fights easy, but it gets much harder

There's lots of standing around and talking in the early stages

Have you ever fancied cleaning up the virtual vomit of a digital monster? Or have you felt the need to take the little critter to the toilet?

If so, this new version of the original pocket monster game could well be for you. However, though it involves the familiar monster training gameplay, there's now a strong role-playing element; the story sees you cast as a 12-year-old boy stuck in the digital world after an accident. Tron, anyone?



You initially have three Digimon packages to choose from. Here is your first meeting

If you liked the previous Digimon games you'll doubtless enjoy this new turn-based battle effort. However, those who have never entered the world of digital duffing-up will find it slow and full of tedious text to trawl through.

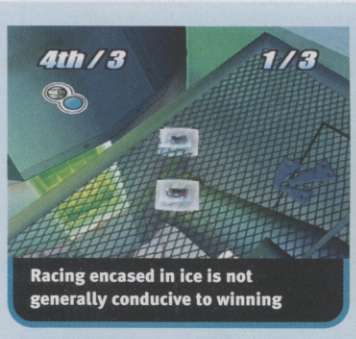
VERDICT

With its new elements, Digimon fans will love this. Everyone else should pray the UK release of Animal Crossing comes soon. ***Jimmy***

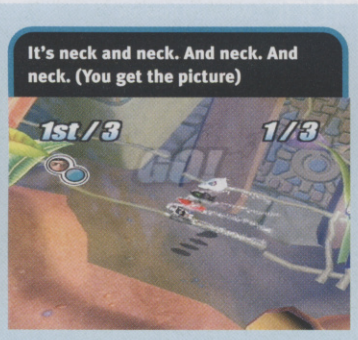
GOOD VS BAD

- If you are Digimon-crazy, this'll satisfy
- Long game
- Slow
- Not much fun
- Poor graphics

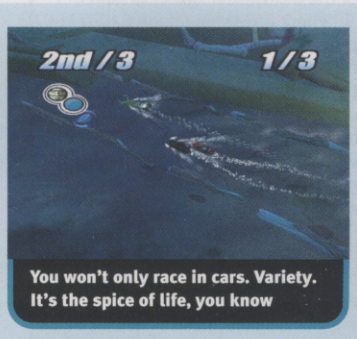
6 OUT OF TEN



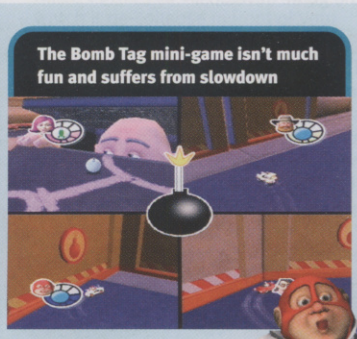
Racing encased in ice is not generally conducive to winning



It's neck and neck. And neck. And neck. (You get the picture)



You won't only race in cars. Variety. It's the spice of life, you know



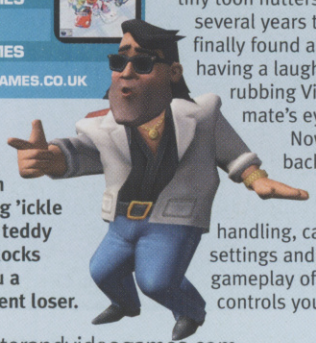
The Bomb Tag mini-game isn't much fun and suffers from slowdown

MICROMACHINES

Small on realism and originality, big on fun

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: NOV.8
DEVELOPER: INFOGRAMES
URL: WWW.INFOGRAMES.CO.UK



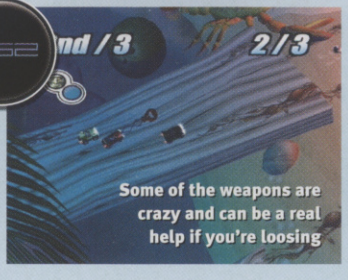
Once upon a time, spending Saturday afternoon in your bedroom sending 'ickle cars crashing around teddy bears and building blocks would have made you a complete pre-pubescent loser.

Then, almost a decade ago, videogames made it cool.

The motors in question were MicroMachines, the drivers were tiny toon nutters with attitude and for several years thousands of us finally found a cheap conduit for having a laugh together without rubbing Vim into your fat mate's eyeballs.

Now the MM series' is back with its first next-gen foray, and it's a return to the simple handling, cartoon looks, silly settings and uncomplicated gameplay of before. The only controls you need worry about are a couple of buttons and your direction, so pick-up-and-play isn't an issue. But because of the viewpoint, you'll only be a great player once you've learnt the tracks. Then all you need is a few mates and as many controllers for a great night in. Cool.

PS2



Some of the weapons are crazy and can be a real help if you're loosing

GT3-type racer comparisons are pointless, since the MM series was never really about ultra-realism and amazing graphics anyway, instead putting emphasis on the simple pleasures of party-style gaming. That still holds true in this latest instalment, and it's still a good laugh. We don't really rate the new Bomb Tag game as it feels too slow, though.

VERDICT

If you're up for some no-nonsense fun, this should do it. The concept may be simple and a bit retro, but it's satisfying all the same. ***Jimmy***

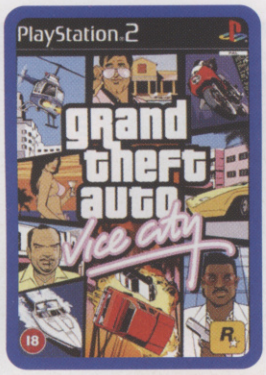
GOOD VS BAD

- Great multiplayer
- Funny
- Interactive tracks
- Viewpoint can annoy
- New mini-game is a bit boring

7 OUT OF TEN

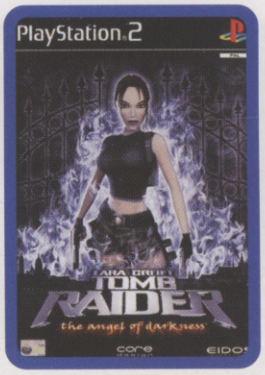
PS 2

FREE DELIVERY ON ALL ITEMS!



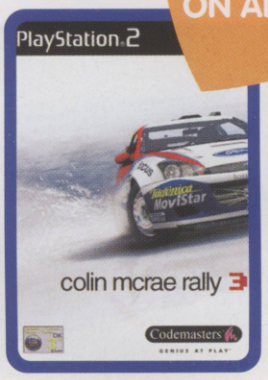
~~RRP £44.99~~ **£32.99**

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City



~~RRP £44.99~~ **£32.99**

Lara Croft - Tomb Raider - The Angel of Darkness

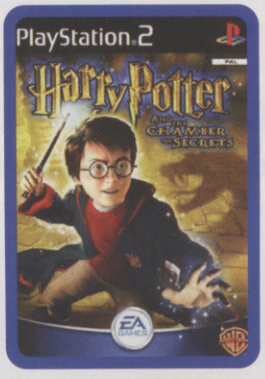


~~RRP £39.99~~ **£32.99**

Colin McRae Rally 3

~~RRP £44.99~~ **£34.99**

Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers



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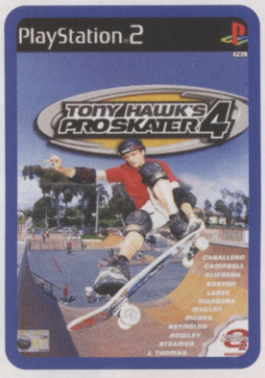
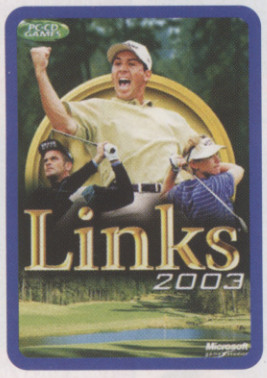
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets



~~RRP £39.99~~ **£32.99**

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4

PC

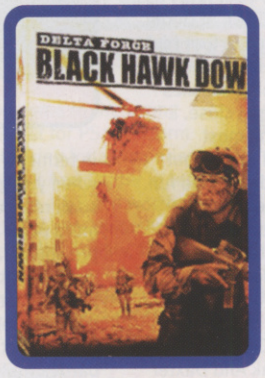


~~RRP £34.99~~ **£28.99**

Links 2003

~~RRP £29.99~~ **£24.99**

No One Lives Forever 2



~~RRP £34.99~~ **£29.99**

Delta Force: Black Hawk Down

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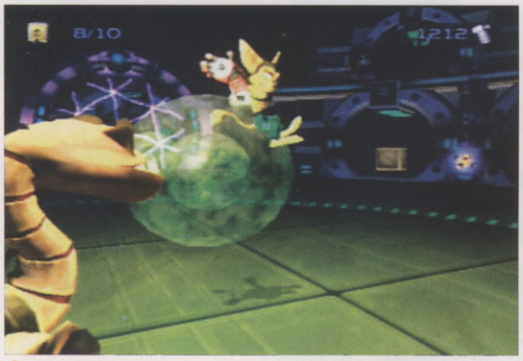
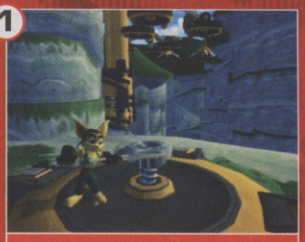


This monster does a great Marlon Brando in The Godfather

IT'S TIME TO SCREW

As well as using your big ratchet to twat enemies, it can be used for DIY purposes too. When you come across a giant screw, turn it, and the landscape surrounding you will change slightly, enabling you to access new areas.

1 

Tighten the screw...

2

...to change the landscape

Ratchet & Clank

Nut-tightening platform mayhem

RECOMMENDED • CVG • RECOMMENDED

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £44.99
PUBLISHER: SONY
OUT: NOV. 8
DEVELOPER: INSOMNIAC GAMES
URL: WWW.INSOMNIACGAMES.COM

Fire-starter: go bananas with the flame-thrower and sizzle some evil ass

If you blast an enemy, they won't just go out like a wet fart. They'll explode in a gigantic ball of flames. Ka-boom!

Vicious green monsters with gobs the size of dustbin lids begin pouring out of ventilation ducts, then start rushing towards you, jaws snapping.

But before these snarling aliens can sink their teeth into your fuzzy ass, you swiftly equip your Glove of Doom and hit fire! A squad of cute, foot-high robot soldiers pop out, leg it towards your attackers like homing missiles and explode once they get close. Weird? Not at all. Not the most conventional method of attack, but certainly effective and dead good fun.

And your next challenge? To defeat an army of 10,000 fearsome beasts, armed only with an old sock and a bar of soap. Come get some!

RATCHET & DAXTER?

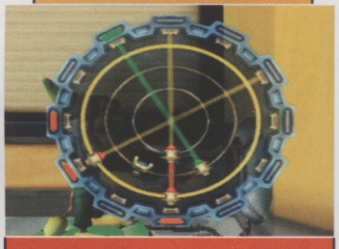
Up till now, Ratchet & Clank has been frequently likened to Jak And Daxter in terms of style and content. But when you get hands-on with R&C you soon realise that it's actually much more of an action-shooter than Sony's previous platform hit.

The emphasis in this mission-based blaster is more on collecting cool weapons and gadgets, and going ballistic in the many intense mini battles that lurk around every corner.

Of course, there are loads of challenges and objectives you must undertake in order to complete a stage, but there's rarely a moment when you're not having to kill

CRACKER

There are some doors that you cannot open unless you crack the mini laser-light-puzzle security system next to them.



These tricky little brain-teasers get tougher as the adventure progresses

C'MON, LET'S HAVE IT!

If you're just wanting to experience the simple thrill of running around blasting anything and everything that moves, Ratchet & Clank hits the spot, providing you with a truly meaty arsenal of nutty weapons.

1

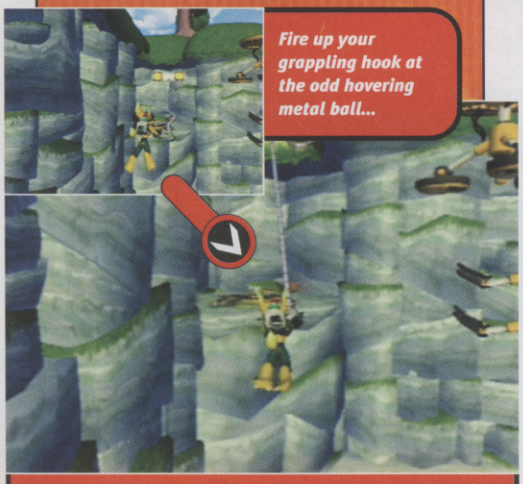
2

Come over all Reservoir Dogs and go psycho on a pair of robotic goons with your rapid-fire Blaster gun

The Glove of Doom fires little robots that hone in on enemies and self-destruct

KING OF THE SWINGERS

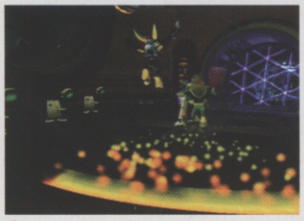
Our hero is a versatile little varmint. He can zipline across wide abysses and swing from platform to platform like a furry Indiana Jones.



Fire up your grappling hook at the odd hovering metal ball...

...then muster your power and might and take a big swing across to solid ground. Ah, that's better

These guys have got mean hollow eyes. Cook 'em to a crisp



Sink an axe into the top of this ugly alien's skull. Eat it!

Exhibit seven: some classic platform precision-jumping action. Nothing new, but great fun, nonetheless

something in the process. You'll have to annihilate hundreds of aggressive sand sharks, pummel flame-thrower-wielding thugs, gun down robots with spinning saws for arms, and obliterate loads of other fierce and funky foes.

It's this wide variety of mean weapons and kooky enemies that helps keep the action in R&C feeling fresh and exciting from start to finish.

Ratchet considers a suicidal leap over the edge. Cheer up, little fella, things aren't that bad

SOLID AS A ROCK

Going berserk with your giant ratchet (that's something like a spanner to us simple British folk) is seriously satisfying. Even if your name isn't Handy Andy. Every time you thump an enemy with the hefty tool, it looks, sounds and feels remarkably solid.

What's more, the same can be said for all the other weapons you collect and use over the course of your intergalactic adventure: you'll be hammering gangs of weirdoes with rapid-fire plasma bolts from your Blaster and turning them to space dust with bombs from your aptly named Bomb Glove.

All this action takes place amidst a wicked array of densely detailed and impressively vibrant environments on the many different planets you visit on your quest. Ranging from sunny, sprawling, cloud-level metropolises to dark, muddy industrial levels, every stage looks dreamy. And the levels are designed so that you're forced to put some pretty special precision-jumping skills into action in order to access every area and achieve all your goals.

Banzai! Adopt a fierce warrior attitude, because there are whole armies of fearsome baddies to obliterate

MISSING THE MAGIC SPARK?

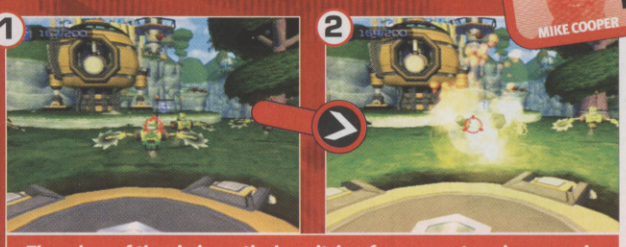
R&C is guaranteed to entertain and hold your attention with its combination of gung-ho action, loads of gadgets, deliciously crafted landscapes and mildly amusing storyline. However, the game lacks the flair and truly original innovative touches of genius of a classic like Mario Sunshine. The mad weapons and wacky enemies are cool, but there's nothing that grabs you by the goolies and loudly yells: "You ain't ever experienced anything like this before!"

So, if you were hoping to be blown away by a genre-bending wonder, you've come to the wrong place. But for PS2 platform fans looking for an experience to match Jak And Daxter in terms of sheer fun, R&C is a worthy and wonderful successor. Approach this game with a hungry, fun-loving attitude and you'll be sure to reap the benefits with hours of intense, quirky and rewarding platform chaos.

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE (better than)
RATCHET & CLANK (more than)
KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL

RIGHT ON TARGET

Ratchet automatically aims at any enemy he's facing directly. However, if you want – or, indeed, need – to manually aim at an object or enemy, you can do so by entering a first-person view to gain optimum accuracy.



The colour of the aiming reticule switches from green to red once you're bang on target. That, dear gamers, is your cue to let rip!

REVIEWER
MIKE COOPER

VERDICT

Buckets of action and classic platforming fun. Not that original but for sheer entertainment Ratchet & Clank is right up there with Jak And Daxter. **Mike**

GOOD VS BAD

- Mech monsters to mash
- Tons of crazy weapons and gadgets
- Huge environments

- Short on inspiration and imagination
- Not original enough to be a platforming classic

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Super Mario Sunshine (GC)*
- *Jak And Daxter (PS2)*

8
OUT OF TEN

GUNGRAVE

Can **style triumph** over content? **Hell no!**

The screen pulses with psychotic gunfights, colourful misfit enemies and exploding apocalyptic scenery. Playing Gungrave treats your eyes to some of the slickest and craziest cel-shaded visuals since Jet Set Radio Future.

But here's the rub: the controls are oafishly clumsy, the main character's painfully slow, the camera's rubbish and the whole thing can be finished in well under two hours. What a waste of a great-looking game.

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
OUT: NOV. 15
DEVELOPER: RED
URL: WWW.GUNGRAVE.COM

The old Matrix-style dive-and-shoot technique, eh? Lame!

Grave's coffin also doubles up as an upgradeable mêlée weapon

REVIEWER: MIKE COOPER

GRAVE MISTAKES

Although the action looks amazing, there are some fatal flaws in the overall gameplay.

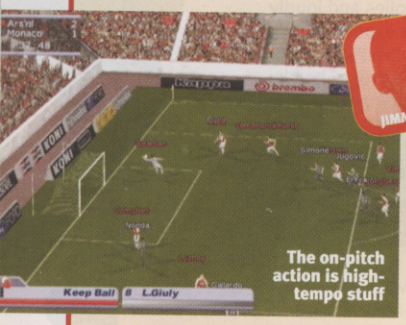
For starters it feels like Grave, the main guy, has boots filled with concrete. And it's not just his snail-like speed that'll get on your wick. Although he can pull off elaborate leaps in any direction, guns ablaze à la Max Payne, he can't even turn and strafe or rotate on the spot very easily. Bumbling oaf! This means that you spend most your time trying to figure out how to take out multiple enemies in the least cumbersome way. All wrong.

Check out Grave's nifty gun skills. Not a patch on DMC's Dante, though

WHAT A BUNCH OF EEJITS

You'd think that having to cope with a crappy control system all the time would enable enemies to tear you to shreds in an instant. Think again, because the enemy AI in Gungrave is

ZONE OF ENDERS
BETTER THAN GUNGRAVE WORSE THAN
THE BOUNCER

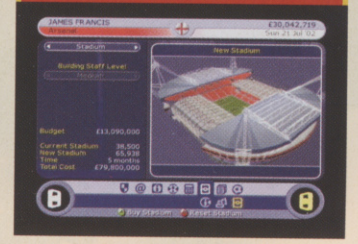


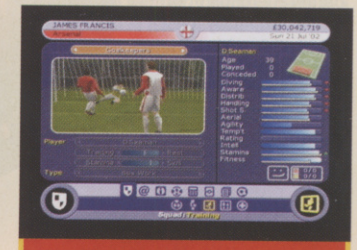
REVIEWER: JIMMY FRANCIS

The on-pitch action is high-tempo stuff

Changing formation is as easy as in table football. Looks similar, too

Construct a new stadium from scratch: punters equal cash





Stop Seaman conceding goals like the one against Brazil. Oh, the pain!

LMA MANAGER 2003

Get **hands-on**, mould your **perfect team**

Girls right across Europe will pull their hair out in frustration, wondering why their menfolk are glued to screens full of numbers and energy bars in a game that doesn't look much different from last year's.

No matter how hard you try to explain, they just won't understand how the sight of them parading around in slinky undies can't distract you from the joy of getting hands-on with your favourite European club team.

You get to play through the current season exactly as it would be: all the stats, all the real players, all the fixtures. It's a beautiful thing.

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £44.99
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
OUT: NOV. 3
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS
URL: WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM

It goes without saying that if you don't like football, you'll hate this game. In fact, even for footie-philes, the volume of options – you are involved in everything from picking the team to building a new stadium – is, at first view, daunting. But the easy interface means you'll soon get to know your squad and be crafting the best team on the continent.

DO AS I SAY

The improved transfer system makes it so easy: you simply need to stick in the search parameters and let it do all the work. Even the games themselves look better than ever (like a PES2 match!) and you can shout still shout

Track your team's progress from last season. Beautiful

Rack up huge combos in order to fill your special attack gauge

The bosses are brilliantly designed, but dead easy to beat

appalling. Most of the evil freaks are so uncoordinated they couldn't hit an elephant on the arse with a banjo at two paces. It's likely only one in every hundred bullets fired at you will hit the mark. This makes getting through the six small levels a total breeze.

To be fair, third-person arcade shooters aren't often as manic or slick-looking as Gungrave. It's worth renting just to see it in full flow, but if you buy it, you will feel robbed.

Some of the effects are amazing. Shame the gameplay sucks ass

Enemy AI is so bad you're rarely hit

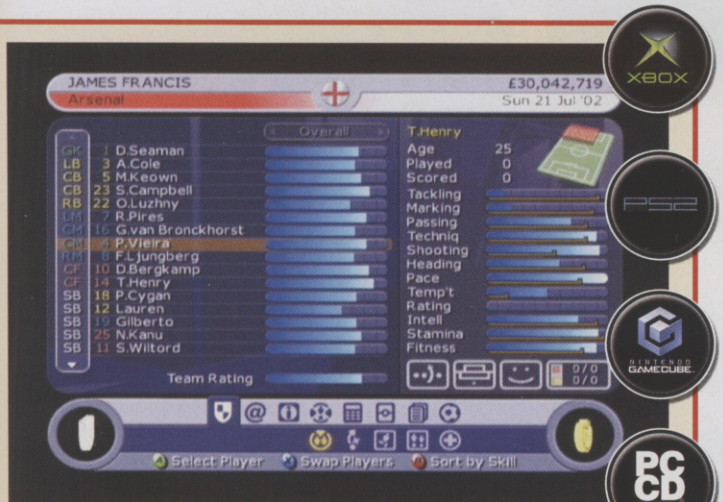
CVG VERDICT

Flashy graphics and animation can't steal your attention away from Gungrave's tragically flawed gameplay. It's a crying shame. ***Mike***

GOOD VS BAD

- Explosive action
- Cool cast of great-looking baddies
- The main character moves like a sloth
- Terrible enemy AI

4
OUT OF TEN



Compare players to see who should and shouldn't be kicked out

instructions at your players from the dugout, although there's no option for, "Stop acting like a tart and PLAY!" from the touchline.

It may not have the depth of Championship Manager, but it's the best football management title on console and a noticeable improvement on the already sound earlier incarnations.

The replays are almost as good as those in Pro Evolution

CVG VERDICT

Looking at figures has never been so interesting. LMA 2003 is undeniably the definitive console football management game. ***Jimmy***

GOOD VS BAD

- All the players, stats and fixtures
- Watchable games
- Lots of text
- If you don't like footie, don't bother

9
OUT OF TEN

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: KONAMI
URL: WWW.KONAMI.COM

Konami's masterful, cerebral adventure arrives on Xbox in an essentially no-frills port. Okay, it could have done with a few Xbox extras but it's still a great game.

Solve the mystery of your own death by exploring four different time zones in a combat-free adventure that's mostly played out in cutscenes. It's the ace story that keeps you

Death, romance, time-travel...

...and five different endings – it's deep

7
OUT OF TEN

SEGA SOCCER SLAM

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: SEGA
URL: WWW.UK.INFOGRAMES.COM

Soccer Slam takes a distinctly light-hearted approach to football. So if you fancy playing a footie game that encourages you to thump your rivals or take to the air to score impressive but acrobatically-impossible goals, this should hit the spot.

That said, it's probably still a touch too shallow for most – it's no Pro Evo 2, but then it's not meant to be. Grab some mates as it's best in multiplayer.

Slam the ball with the power shots

7
OUT OF TEN

MASTER RALLYE

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: MICROIDS
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: STEEL MONKEYS
URL: WWW.MICROIDS.COM/ENGLISH

There are so many rally games around that any new one needs a hook to get people excited. Stuff like fancy graphics (V-Rally 3) or an innovative new scoring system (Shox).

This game has neither, offering competent but very plain, ordinary racing across bland environments. It's hard to recommend this over other racers.

Does nothing a million other rally games don't do

4
OUT OF TEN

Unreal TOURNAMENT 2003

A videogame supermodel – beautiful but something's missing

GAME INFO BOX

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 64
COST: £29.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: EPIC GAMES
URL: WWW.UNREALTOURNAMENT2003.COM

Ever seen the controversial Cronenberg thriller Crash, where drivers get kinky kicks from deliberately hurting themselves in car wrecks? Then you'll know what reviewing UT2K3 is like. You've seen our score on the opposite page, which we're publishing knowing full well the extreme pain we'll suffer at the hands of outraged sections of the PC shooter community as a result.

The thing is, for most of us, while UT2K3 looks utterly amazing, gameplay-wise it seems faintly disappointing, failing to offer obvious major improvements, innovations or even substantial amounts of new weapons or modes of play. Nor does it feel as fresh as the original three-year-old masterpiece.

TIMESPLITTERS 2
BETTER THAN UNREAL 2003
UNREAL 2003
WORSE THAN
RED FACTION 2

And this is in low res! Explains why we took over 1,000 screenshots...

TWEAK ME

Make no mistake, it has eye-melting visuals and is still a damn good twitch-reaction shooter – one of the best on any format this year. Invest enough time to learn the maps, the tactical subtleties of the new modes of play and the tweaked weapons, and you'll find being a Monster Killing maniac on a server with 16 players is still one of the last words in shooter satisfaction right now.

However, UT2K3 also seems more like the original Tournie's arch-rival, Quake 3. Epic wants UT2K3 to be more skills-based, cutting out so-called 'spam' frags like blind-firing a spread of rockets into hotspots, hoping one will hit home. So weapons and damage have been thoroughly tweaked (see Rail Wail, top right), and, with the new abundance of jump-ramps and bounce-pads, you'll need to be even more of a master of air control.

OUT-MODED

One-player has an improved bot team feature, but UT2K3 is really about online multiplayer, so broadband's a must. Deathmatch, Team DM and CTF return, Domination has been simplified, while Assault has been replaced with the rugby-like Bombing Run, which presents some interesting tactical options but is not entirely unlike one-flag CTF. We feel a bit short-changed.

1

Result! You'll want to turn off the awful commentary, though

Double Domination: the scoring works better now, but we still don't like it

2

SHE'S GOT THE LOOKS

There's stuff-all point us raving on about the new game engine – look at our screenshots and imagine it five times more gob-smackingly beautiful when you're actually playing.

1

Look! Camp behind individual blades of grass! Except it's pointless if the other guy has 'Foliage' turned off. Boo!

Many levels are fantastically broody and atmospheric, but some layouts feel a touch uninspired and play flat

2

3

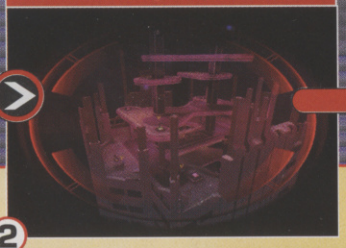
Bodies crackle with electricity from the Lightning Gun, but even on a PIII PC, UT2K3 is the best looking shooter yet

RAIL WAIL

We wanted to see more new weapons too. Instead, we must settle mainly for tweakage to old faves. We're sad to see the demise (for now!) of the Ripper, but at least the random hilarity of the goo-spewing Bio Rifle remains, so Epic hasn't totally lost the comedy touches that helped make the original stand out from po-faced rival Quake 3.

1

You start with the Assault rifle avec grenades plus the Shield gun, so you're less defenceless than before



New one-shot mega weapon the Ion Painter is fun for massed havoc, but we still love the guided Redeemer

2

3

The Link gun is a nice idea but requires real teamplay, which isn't always easily found online

Lightning Gun: has amazing zoom, but is more like a railgun than a sniper rifle, leaving a tell-tale trail

4

The skins for all the species are amazingly detailed

Look! And we're only using a GeForce II

The name's Gore, Plenty O'Gore. But blood comes in more than one shade

Ragdoll death animations! Even better when it's someone else

ADRENALINE RUSH

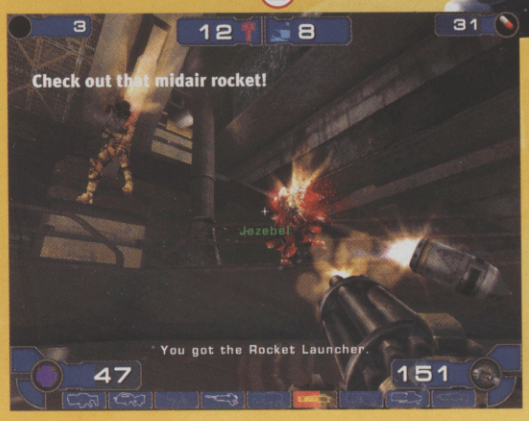
Adrenaline combos are one of UT2K3's big tactical innovations – get 100 points and you choose when to unleash power-ups like Berserk. But it's dumb to present the key combinations as 'secrets' to discover. And not losing much adrenaline for dying rewards you for frag skills but not for also staying alive between kills. A little rushed maybe?

1

Did Epic suspect the idea hadn't been properly thought through?

Might explain why it made it an optional mutator that you can turn on or off

2



It also feels more relentless than before, with fewer options for a change of pace – like it's meant to be played without taking a breath between frags. Try camping in the shadows with the new ranged Lightning Gun and you're lit up like a Christmas tree. All of which means some players (even those still happy with the multiplayer-orientated, no-story, arena-fragging formula) may find it less fun, less accessible and more, well, hardcore.

GO FORTH AND MULTIPLAY

Sure, for the hardcore online shooter freaks the release of UT2K3 is merely the start of the game's evolution. In the coming months, you'll see so many home-grown maps, mods and mutators that UT2K3 will take on a life of its own among the online shooter community. With millions of hours of play and experimentation it'll grow into something even better. Which, with its built-in editor tool, is exactly what the game's designed to do.

But while frustrated bedroom coders may love messing around with new play modes, mutators and designing levels, we can't help but feel there's something wrong if developers like Epic are relying on the gamers themselves to come up with the real innovations and inspiration that players want.

We're also puzzled about the way UT2K3 has come seemingly from nowhere (first revealed less than a year ago exclusively in CVG), and how the already-announced Unreal 2 co-incidentally lost its multiplayer side around the same time. The lack of major new gameplay innovations like the proposed vehicles – not to mention the large overlap with Xbox's exclusive Unreal Championship – suggests it has been turned around in a bit of a hurry to fill an online PC shooter hole, what with Quake 4 still a way off. At least we assume it is... CVG

CVG VERDICT

Looks amazing. A solid shooter, but feels a bit rushed and uninnovative in places. We wanted the FPS equivalent of VF4; instead we got Tekken 4. **Pete** CVG

GOOD VS BAD

- Best looking FPS yet
- PC's new twitch-reaction shooter daddy
- Huge online support

- More serious, less fun
- Few big innovations, new modes or weapons

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

- *Original Unreal Tournament (PC)*
- *TimeSplitters 2 (PS2)*

8
OUT OF TEN

QUANTUM REDSHIFT

Futuristic hover action. Sound familiar?

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1-4
COST: £39.99
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
OUT: NOW
DEVELOPER: CURLY MONSTERS
URL: WWW.XBOX.COM/UK

Wipeout set the precedent for hover-racer games, and now Quantum Redshift is doing something similar on Xbox.

You race Single Person Armed Racing Craft across 16 tracks in tournaments ranging from Novice to 'Redshift', with an initial cache of eight characters to race as.

Complete the Novice difficultly for the Nemesis Challenge, a grudge match against an unlockable character. Win that and your nemesis' and their souped-up racer will be yours to rag. Nice one.

BRIGHT SPARC

Pass Amateur level and the difficulty cranks up a couple of notches, with races becoming much more exciting.

Everyone has their own 'home level'. This one's in Russia

This strangely coiffured fellow looks like a reject from Fame Academy

This is when your power-ups become vitally important and you can trade points for enhanced shields and missiles to get an extra edge.

But tracks aren't very inspired, and, like the visuals and sound effects, they don't take full advantage of the Xbox's power. On the plus side, though, the feeling of speed is immense, and with so much to unlock and fast, fun multiplayer action, this could be a worthwhile investment.

You'll be hovering over sea as well as land

Drips on the lens have been done before but they're always a nice touch

VERDICT

Provides a tremendous sense of speed and some mad arcade action, despite being unoriginal and quite bland-looking. ***Jimmy***

GOOD VS BAD
- Fast-paced fun
- Lots to unlock
- Unique on Xbox
- Bland graphics
- Poor sound
- Cheesy cutscenes

7 OUT OF TEN

TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE

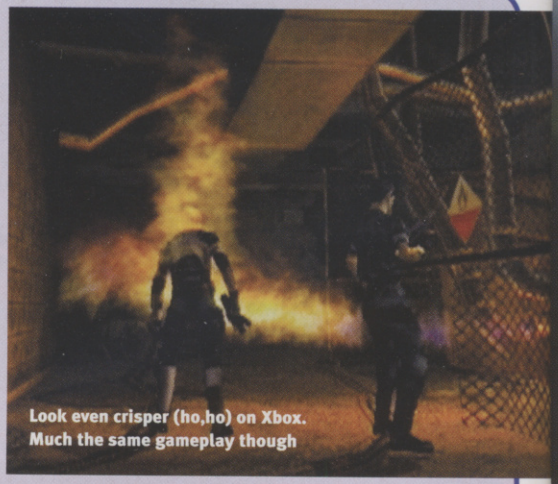
A cool movie licence – terminated

Maybe it's the dawn of a new kind of videogame: one that only works laterally. Y'see, after a few hours play, you really will feel like Kyle Reese and want to travel back in time and undo everything Terminator is about to mess up. Sadly, CVG's time machine is bust and we all have to live with the reality that this great movie licence just got terminated – again.

It's action all the way as you try to get Kyle to the time machine so he can fight Arnie in the first movie.

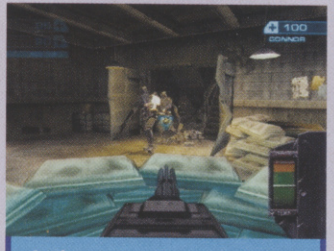
The atmosphere is very Terminator, but gameplay is repetitive, mostly involving manoeuvring your badly animated character through huge but poorly designed levels, shooting at enemies with terrible AI. Awful camera angles linked to your controls make some levels virtually unplayable.

While the adrenalin boost which makes your character faster and stronger helps, when it runs out and you're stumbling around in a dark room with 20 evil eyes glowing in your direction, you'll wonder why you bought a half-finished game.


Look even crisper (ho,ho) on Xbox. Much the same gameplay though

Despite the dark theme, there's lots of variety in the rooms

GAME INFO BOX
NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1
COST: £44.99
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
OUT: OCT. 25
DEVELOPER: PARADIGM
URL: WWW.INFOGRAMES.CO.UK


In the gun turrets you don't have to worry about the camera

VERDICT

A good atmosphere, but dire camera angles make controls a nightmare while the monotonous gameplay all too soon gets to you . ***Jimmy***

GOOD VS BAD
- Some nice textures
- Good cutscenes
- Right atmosphere
- Terrible AI
- Bad camera system
- Poor animations

4 OUT OF TEN

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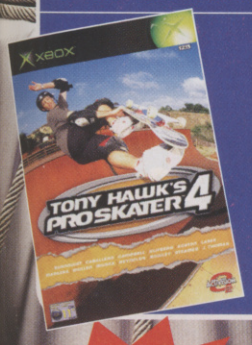

The way we play Tony Hawk's 4 will make your brain bubble and fizz with amazement

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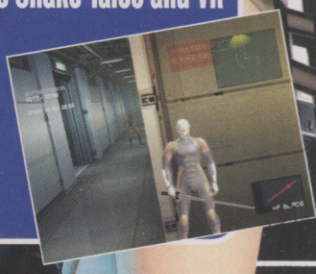

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CVG

win the ho t

Here we go again, with yet another bundle of excellent prizes for some of you lucky readers to get your hands on – provided you can get your brains in gear, of course. Not only do we have some super-cool Manga films and the ace game RC Copter Challenge to give away, but also copies of Eidos' latest masterpiece TimeSplitters 2. And if you're *really* good, you could win a Reign Of Fire goody-bag with you own brand spanking new PS2 to play it on!

8th

RC SPORTS COPTER CHALLENGE

5 TO WIN

If you played Pilotwings on the N64, you'll love Copter Challenge. It recreates the mood of that classsic, with you playing a helicopter pilot striving to get his licence.

What was the name of the cult '80s TV series that featured a modified helicopter?

■ A. Aircat ■ B. Airbear ■ C. Airwolf ■ D. Airllama

COURTESY OF XICAT INTERACTIVE

7th

BLACK BELT CHALLENGE

5 TO WIN

Do you fancy kicking your mates' butts over the GBA's Game Link Cable? Getting your hands on this hectic beat 'em up could provide your chance.

What's the lowest-level belt you can have in Karate?

■ A. Turquoise belt ■ B. White belt ■ C. Pink belt ■ D. Black belt

COURTESY XICAT INTERACTIVE

6th

INVADER

5 TO WIN

Are you a man or a mouse, freedom-fighter? Join the war against Swarm, the deadly alien force invading your home planet, in this action-packed airborne game.

What is the name of the area in Nevada associated with alleged UFO landings?

■ A. Area 51 ■ B. The M25 ■ C. The 51st State ■ D. Blink 182

COURTESY XICAT INTERACTIVE

5th

EVANGELION: DEATH AND REBIRTH

5 TO WIN

This is the latest film from the maker of animé classic Ghost In The Shell. It follows a 14-year-old battling against the Angels, who are invading a barren Earth.

What is the name of the first animé 'classic'?

■ A. Akira ■ B. Eureka ■ C. Viera ■ D. Taramasalata

COURTESY OF MANGA

4th

TIMESPLITTERS 2

5 TO WIN

Fry your eyes and shatter your senses in the PS2's explosive frag-fest. Win a copy now and gather your mates round for some of the finest multiplayer action on the planet.

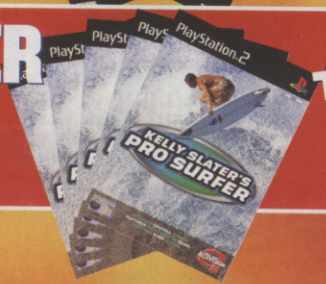
What is the name of the BBC's famous time-travelling doctor?

■ A. Doctor Who ■ B. Dr No ■ C. Dr Evil ■ E. Dr Dolittle

COURTESY OF EIDOS

3rd

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER



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What is the Japanese name for a tidal wave?

■ A. Origami ■ B. Tsunami ■ C. Salami ■ D. Pastrami

COURTESY OF ACTIVISION

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2nd

REIGN OF FIRE BUMPER PACK!

4 TO WIN

COURTESY OF BAM! ENTERTAINMENT

This high-octane third-person shooter sees you take on one of the film's major roles. If you want to tear around a post-apocalyptic London in a variety of monster vehicles, or as the dragons themselves, enter now.

Which star of Reign Of Fire made his mark on Hollywood in the gory movie American Psycho?

■ A. Christian Slater ■ B. Christian Culkin
■ C. Christian Bale ■ D. Hayden Christensen

FINISH HERE

1st

REIGN OF FIRE BUMPER PACK WITH PS2!

1 TO WIN

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Who currently reigns in the United Kingdom?

■ A. The Prime Minister ■ B. Queen Elizabeth
■ C. Queen Amidala ■ D. The Editor of CVG

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REIGN OF FIRE PACK
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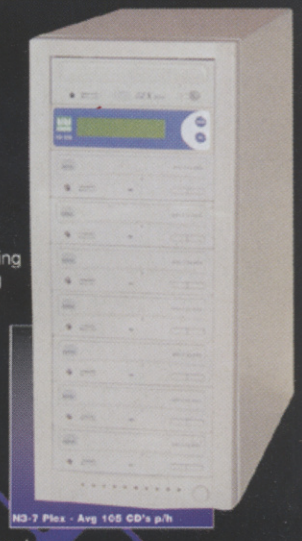

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PUBLISHER: EA
OUT: NOV. 8
DEVELOPER: STORMFRONT STUDIOS /EA REDWOOD
URL: WWW.EA.COM/EAGAMES

WORDS/SCREENS: PETE WALKER

It takes a special kind of a movie where even the merest hint of a trailer can make the entire CVG team gawp like gormless goons hit by a very large stupid stick. Rings lunacy has reached such a fever pitch here that you could stick a bushy beard on a paper cup and huddled masses would gather round to stroke it lovingly.

So you can imagine the excitement when review code for EA's The Two Towers PS2 game arrived. Play as Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli! Fight all the major bosses from the first and second movies! See footage from the second movie, months before it goes on release!!

"I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT'S A WARG"

Under any other circumstances, we'd be embarrassed by such pathetic mass mewlings of appreciation at every new cutscene and drawn-out analysis of each fresh location and different monster type . Luckily for you, our fanaticism over Peter Jackson's Oscar-winning movie trilogy also means we can spot a lame licensed videogame cash-in like crotchless knickers on a goblin.

The good news is that, while you may be understandably suspicious of the relatively short turnaround for such a big movie licence (compared with, say, The Matrix), what EA has come up with is a stonkingly

The bootiful dappled lighting at Amon Hen made Gimli feel sleepy

Aragorn cracks off a quickie with his bow before ducking for cover from the cave troll in Balin's tomb

Flaming 'eck! Saruman's Uruk-Hai lay siege to Helm's Deep with ladders and burning arrows

Weathertop: defend Frodo from The Black Riders! If you saw the movie, you know the Nazgûl's weakness

good fun hack 'n' slash ruckus. Imagine Onimusha meets Dynasty Warriors meets Golden Axe, cleverly melded together with FMV from two triple-A Hollywood blockbusters.

It's no orc-fancier's deep role-playing nirvana and breaks little new ground technically, but it does achieve what it set out to do – it makes you feel like you're playing the best bits of the Rings movies. And if, like us, you tingle excitedly at every new Rings film trailer, the prospect of fighting hordes of orcs and goblins in huge running battles as one of Tolkien's heroes will be too much to resist. So don't.

LEAF IT OUT

To give you that big movie licence feel, EA has made excellent use of FMV from the first and soon-to-be-released second movie. Movie footage regularly switches directly to in-game cutscenes, which add pace and do a good job of setting each scenario in the larger tale of the Ring.

So an FMV Aragorn instantly becomes a playable one, seen at the same location, panning out from the same camera angle and blended together using both the movie score and narrative, and sometimes with new voice recordings by the stars of the movie. Locations are either lifted directly from the movies or feel appropriate in terms of the setting, architecture and creatures as well as the atmosphere.

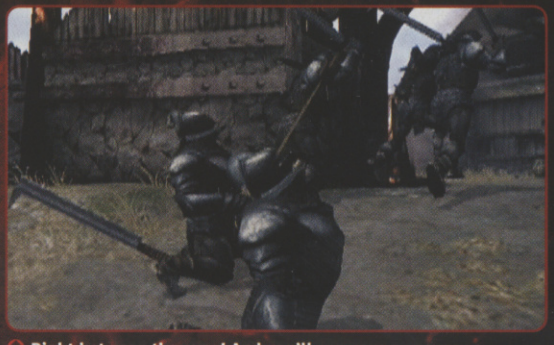
Levels are largely linear and restrictive, but as you fight Uruk-Hai at Amon Hen, hordes of orcs barrel through the trees around you, some stopping to fight, others just running on, looking for Frodo. In Balin's tomb in Moria, as you become corralled behind pillars during part of a cave troll boss fight, the rest of your party fights on in the background. Great stuff.

Heroes and enemies are modelled and move impressively with cool battle and death animations: bodies fly backwards at the force of blows, tottering enemies prop themselves up on their weapons, and the skin on the backs of trolls seems to stretch over their skeletons as they move.

TURN THE LIGHTS LOW

You'll also notice great little details too, like fog on rivers looking disturbed as you wade through it, leaves dropping into water and flowing downstream, moody lighting in tombs and forests, dust trails kicked up by warg-riders thundering past, or arrows which look alive with fire bouncing realistically off armour and casting coloured light as they fly.

We'd recommend you use your hi-fi for surround sound – the howls, grunts and growls of the monsters (especially bosses!), the spooky rustlings and creepy ambient sounds of Fangorn, plus dramatic flare-ups of music really make your stomach flutter. Like a trip to the flicks, Two Towers is definitely a lights-down, volume-up kind of a game.



Right between the eyes! And you'll see your own arrows sticking from enemies like crazy pin-cushions too

Cutscenes blend FMV from both movies with in-game scene-setters

The two meters in the top right tell you how many orcs you've got to kill...

...and how long you've got before Frodo is caught at Amon Hen. Loadsa time!

AUTHOR-NTICITY

One of the great strengths of Jackson's Rings movies is the way they stay broadly true to the spirit of Tolkien's novel, and EA's game does too – not least, no doubt, because it has had to work so closely with New Line Cinema under the licensing arrangements.

So fans of the movie will love the attention to detail, from the replicated feeling of frantic chaos in the battle scenes, and the way dim-witted forest trolls are just as happy killing orcs as Fellowship heroes, to the way a huge Lidless Eye appears on screen every time you die.

FRODO GONE SOLO

While we've assumed the second movie locations in the game are as true to the flick as the first movie ones are (we'll know for sure when the movie is released on December 18), one or two other issues do jar a bit.

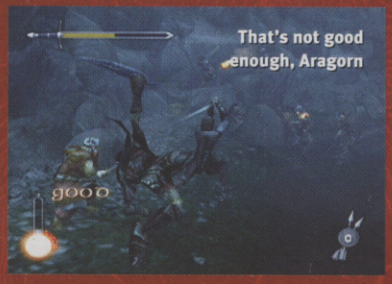
You'll see that levels often start with your playable character charging off ahead of the party to clear the way or perform a designated task, but on occasion you fight alongside groups of computer-controlled heroes re-enacting big movie scenes.

Strangely, though, during scenes like the battle in Balin's tomb or when Aragorn is protecting Frodo on Weathertop, Pippin, Merry and Sam are just not there. If it were down to technical limitations on the PlayStation 2, we'd accept it, albeit grudgingly, but on other levels you're fighting next to loads of Riders of Rohan. So why leave Fellowship members out?

And again, just how much more work would it have been, really, to allow you to play as other Fellowship members from the outset of the game?

Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Gandalf, Frodo and Boromir fight side by side in Balin's tomb, but where are the other hobbits?

THE GIMLI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE



The Two Towers' fighting and levelling up systems are simple to understand but somewhat tougher to truly master – it's easy to lose your head when surrounded by enemies and end up madly hammering every button insanely hoping to pull off some sort of über-orc-nuking move.

You only ever control one character, and every time you kill you get experience points. You start with a choice of basic one-button attacks, including a faster attack, more powerful attack, a kick, a parry and a satisfying, through-the-chest, Onimusha-style finishing move on prone enemies.

Timing and aiming your attack correctly is essential, though, if you're not to be blocked or interrupted, particularly in groups of enemies. Words like 'Perfect' and 'Excellent' tell you how well you have executed your attacks, and the better you perform, the more experience points you get, charging up your Skill meter at the bottom left of the screen.

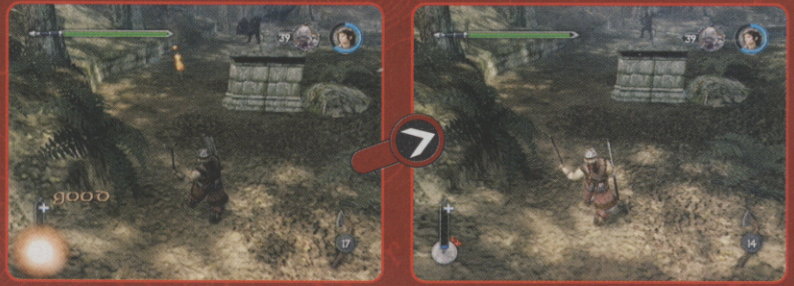
ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

When you do level up, you can then spend these experience points on better, more complicated and more powerful combo attacks, plus health and weapon upgrades.

Anyone familiar with using combo and linked attacks from traditional beat 'em ups will be right at home here, but we found it wasn't essential to master all the more complicated moves to progress – though the more you can pull off easily, the better, especially against bosses.

One of the first combos you purchase with any of the characters is a double X and one Triangle tap, which delivers a spectacular thumping attack, particularly effective even later, but you'll still need to skill up on the timing and aiming element.

If this is a flaw in the fighting system, then it's one that many players won't be that bothered about since it means you don't have to be a combo genius to enjoy the Two Towers experience. At the same time, skilled players will be rewarded with more experience points and be able to purchase more moves quicker. Not a bad compromise, we reckon.



Hold down L1 and tap X to make Gimli lob axes at ranged enemies. You can parry incoming missiles or duck behind that wall for cover. Just let go of L1 and you're ready for mêlée. Easy

TROLLOCS TO YOU

Adding a splash of spice to the standard hack 'n' slash menu are levels incorporating time-related and objective-based elements.

For instance, at Amon Hen you must kill a set number of Uruk-Hai before Frodo's detection meter runs out and he is captured, or in Rohan you must save enough villagers from marauding orcs, or kick assault ladders off before the walls at Helm's Deep are overrun.

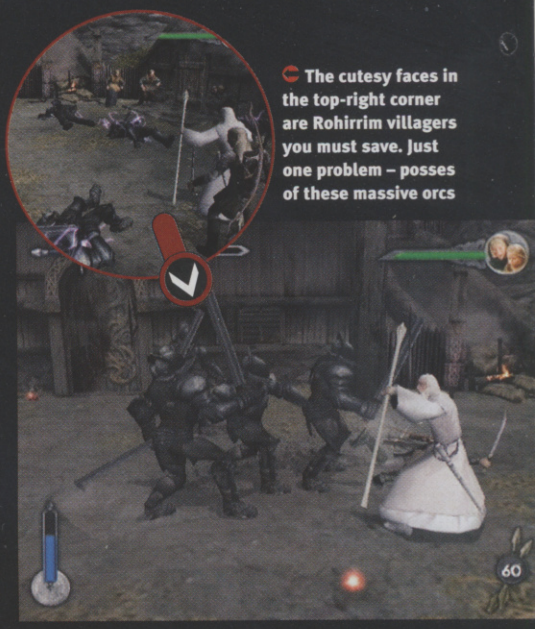
TWEAK MY ORCS

While the balancing is such that if your skills are up to it and your hero is at a high enough level you can achieve this by steady progression through these levels, it also pushes you to tackle scenarios differently, maybe charging ahead at certain points.

However, these sections can also be among the most punishing in the game, sometimes exacerbated by an erratic save feature, which means certain levels require virtually no effort to get to a save point, while others are crucifyingly long. We spent ages dicing evil hordes in Fangorn, only to be ambushed by one lonely Uruk-Hai and sent back almost to the level's start. Grr.

This, combined with occasional sections which were surprisingly tough on the default Normal difficulty, did leave us wondering if some last-minute tweakage had been implemented to ensure Two Towers is challenging (and long) enough.

Let the top-right meter fill up and Helm's Deep will be overrun. The red dots are assault ladders – kick 'em over!



The cutesy faces in the top-right corner are Rohirrim villagers you must save. Just one problem – posses of these massive orcs

Elf skills! Legolas's attacks are so well timed in this sequence that his Skill meter, (bottom left of the screen) lights up like a beacon for crazy pointage in the fourth screen

But this Helm's Deep level is tougher for Legolas, who only manages one basic combo (Elrond's Gambit) in this entire sequence

Ilsidur's Swift Terror is an early combo for Strider

You can get away with blindly twatting anything that moves to start with, but combos are a must later on

Gandalf watches Aragorn unleash a combo! More powerful attacks bust shields before you go in for the kill

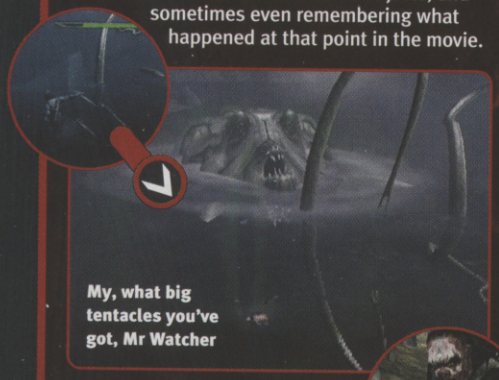
YES, BOSS

You'll have to fight all the bosses from the first two Rings movies, and in true boss battle tradition, you must learn their attack patterns the hard way – through trial and error.

Once you've mastered some high-damage combos and how to time your standard L2 jump backwards move, though, it's mainly a question of staying alive long enough to look for weak spots. Not always as easy as it may sound.

Bosses can be a bit daunting at first, but beat them a couple of times, and some of the most fearsome fighters can subsequently be dispatched with relative ease if you replay with a different character later. Be warned, though: attack patterns aren't always as predictable as they first seem, so don't get too cocky.

We won't spoil it by giving too much away, but we will say that watching their attack patterns is, of course, a must, as is exploring the battle arena for interactive objects, and sometimes even remembering what happened at that point in the movie.

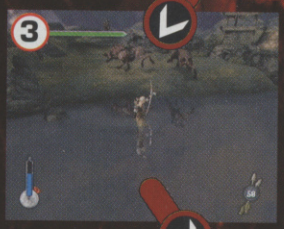


My, what big tentacles you've got, Mr Watcher

...Gimli tries to run but he's just too slow

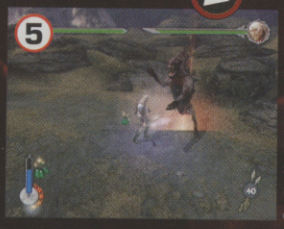
1 Trapped by warg-riders in Rohan! Ranged weapons work best against the minions

2 But this seemingly invulnerable warg-rider boss will ride you down, so use a rush move to duck out of the way



3 Bath time! It's a little-known Middle Earth fact that whiffy wargs don't like water, so Legolas takes a dip

4 When more minions come, pick them off with a bow, then wade ashore for arrow and health pick-ups



5 If you've survived this, you now have a few seconds to look for the boss's weak spots. Repeat until you win or die

C'MON BABY LIGHT MY FARTS

As you'll already have figured, the sweet scent of The Two Towers smells slightly off on occasion thanks to a few videogame air-biscuits.

Since the days of the original Resident Evil, gamers have been debating the merits of dramatic movie-style camera angles versus ease of control. With its cinematic experience approach, The Two Towers also suffers from that age-old irritant.

WHICH WAY NOW?

One minute you're pressing the left analog stick forwards to run into a waterfall, the next the camera angle is looking from inside the waterfall and you're running backwards out the way you just came in. Sometimes this can just feel a little poorly thought out, but it's full-on frustrating in combat if you suddenly have to adjust your attack direction because the camera view switched mid-battle.

The pain of this is sometimes lessened by the quirky auto-aim feature of ranged attacks, which enables you to blind-fire at enemies off-screen. We're not sure whether this is by design or mistake, since it can feel a little silly shooting wildly off the screen and still racking up 'Perfect' scores for your archery 'skills'.

We'd also have liked to see maybe a few puzzles and better use of interactive scenery, not just clearing tables and chairs out of your way or breaking water barrels to extinguish fires and cracking open the occasional chest for ammo or health pick-ups. In fact, a bit more pick-up creativity would have been nice – say, a spot of Onimusha-style orb collecting. Instead, the only pick-up challenge is how long you can leave stuff on the ground until you need it because it disappears after a while. And don't get us started on multiplayer, or rather the lack of it...

That's the last warg dispatched! Bet those lovely green health potions go to waste now, though

WHO TO PLAY AS?

Choosing who to play as at the start of each level is just a throwaway gimmick, right? Thankfully not. The levels themselves are essentially the same (though the cutscenes are character-specific and you can't always predict where the monster will attack), but some missions are easier than others, depending on which character you choose to play as.

Strider is a pretty good all-rounder, but we found levels like The Gates Of Moria less troublesome using Legolas's crazy ranged skills. While you can upgrade the characters' bow and throwing-axe skills, Goldie-locks' insane elfin speed makes him a must for levels with more space, but initially not so good when surrounded by heavily armoured Uruk-Hai in confined areas. Unless you plan to make them kill themselves laughing at his prancing Morris Dancing acrobatics and puny lower-level mêlée combos, which seem to bounce off their plate-mail if your timing is fractionally off.

Gimli: his small stature is deceptive. He may be a bit slow, but this dwarf can take a lot of punishment – and deal it out too

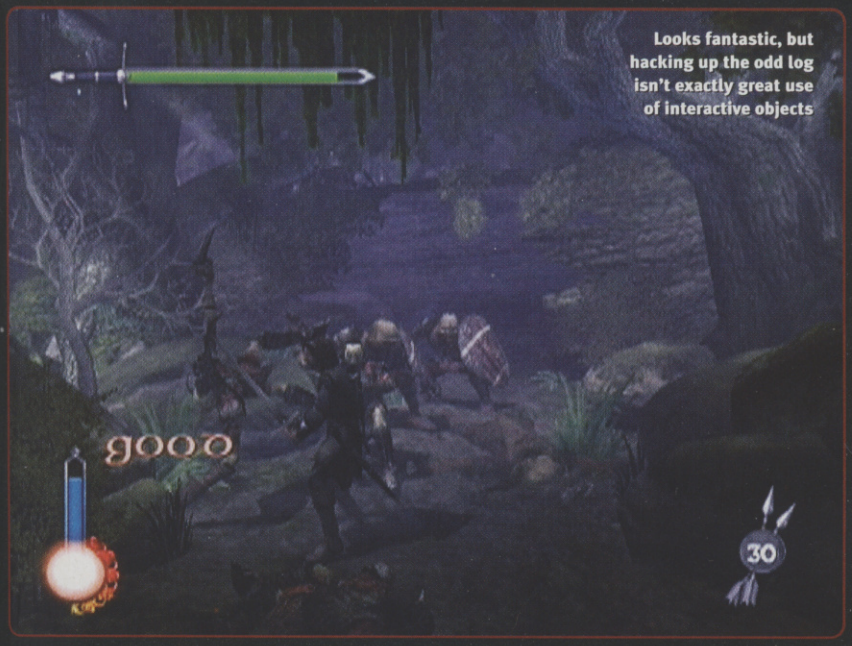
MÊLÉE MAGNIFICO

Anyway, Stormfront has actually done a pretty good job of making the switch between ranged and mêlée attacks instantaneous; so with one tap of the L1 button and some semi auto-aim magic you can virtually crack off a quickie with your bow between sword thrusts. This is a skill essential for your progress through some of the later stages.

More crucially, though, the character you choose to play as will also affect who levels up next, and therefore which new combo skills and upgrades become

Legolas: nimble, fast and the best ranged fighter, but hard-going against armoured Uruks

If you go down to the woods today... unlike in the book, Aragorn gets ambushed by orcs in Fangorn



Looks fantastic, but hacking up the odd log isn't exactly great use of interactive objects

Aragorn: The best all-rounder, Strider learns how not to tackle trolls... the hard way

available. Which in turn makes certain levels easier. But don't worry, you won't have to replay the whole game because you messed up your character development.

Instead, you can replay any level at any point with any of the other two heroes, enabling you to level up all the characters and gain new skills without starting a new game. We found this particularly useful by the time we reached Rohan, where wussy Legolas kept getting his girly locks hacked off (along with his head) by orcs in a burning village in Rohan.

By replaying a few earlier levels as Aragorn, we had him at level six in no time, and he made Uruk-Hai pie out of those same little buggers sharpish. And if you're thinking it all sounds like a lame way to stretch out the total playing time, you'd be wrong about that too. We found we could replay earlier levels with a new hero in one go, mainly because we knew what to expect.

Balin's tomb: small location + multiple camera angles = ouch

CONCLUSION

We've already sicked on you a whole bunch of whinges which explain why we think The Two Towers isn't technically a good videogame, but the simple fact is we enjoyed playing it. And if that isn't the best way to judge whether you should buy a game, then nothing is.

The white stars off the level menu are unlockable features, like this interview with beefy Aragorn actor Viggo Mortensen

BEARDY BLISS

Yes, it's simplistic hack 'n' slash pleasure, with uncomplicated fighting and levelling systems, but then you could say much the same of the Onimusha and Dynasty Warriors games. But for anyone into the Rings movies, playing out the most enjoyable action scenes is a whole bunch of fun on a console.

What's more, seeing FMV from the second movie weeks before it hits cinemas, as well as playing the hero in the new locations (which are presumably accurately reproduced), are very real incentives to pressing on, making completion of each level quite satisfying.

It's not the longest game, though, and replay value is somewhat limited too – probably only the most hardcore Rings fans will keep replaying to unlock some of the treats, like exclusive interviews with the Rings actors, plus a new playable level and character.

GOOD VS BAD

+ ■ Recreates the feel of the film well ■ Get to see Two Towers FMV and locations before the movie ■ Easy to pick up and play ■ Looks great ■ Rings beardiness

– ■ Lightweight hack 'n' slash ■ Basic levelling-up and fighting systems ■ Annoying camera angles ■ Limited replay potential ■ Rings beardiness

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

■ *Any Onimusha or Dynasty Warriors (PS2)* ■ *Golden Axe (arcade)*

7
OUT OF TEN

PART ONE OF CVG'S SIX-PART QUEST TO FIND...

BRITAIN'S BRAINIEST GAMER!

LOADS OF COOL GEAR UP FOR GRABS

If aliens invaded our world, it would be CVG readers that some secret intergalactic agency would recruit to pilot prototype Starfighters and other great stuff like that. But until now, you've all been kept a secret. So we've decided: it's time to reveal BRITAIN'S BRAINIEST GAMER!

No doubt such a person will be elusive as hell, so we've set a cunning trap that no self-respecting games guru could resist: answer these questions to prove your worth!

For the next six months, CVG will be running a bunch of questions like this, and every issue we'll pick out a winner. Then, in May next year, we'll invite all six winners to our London HQ for a Grand Finale. And what a finale this will be! In addition to facing a final set of super-difficult games-related questions, we'll test other attributes to discover whether or not you have the faculties to be a true gaming champion!

For example: how long can you sit on the floor with your legs crossed? How long can you stare without blinking? You know, stuff you usually do without thinking, but might feel uneasy performing under pressure. Only the worthy will survive.

Send us the answers to these questions on a postcard. Prove you're the saviour of the gaming universe and we'll reward you with treasures untold (all will be revealed next issue!) Fifteen questions. Starts easy. Ends tough. Let's have you!

Send your answers to:
Britain's Brainiest Gamer #253
Computer And Video Games, Dennis Publishing
30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD
Closing date for this issue is 20 Nov 2002.

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BRITAIN'S BRAINIEST GAMER! PART 1/6

EASY

1. Who's this guy?
- ❑ A.....Wonder Dude
- ❑ B.....Super Mario
- ❑ C.....Macho Mike

2. And who's this gal?
- ❑ A.....Crafty Laura
- ❑ B.....Leslie Crufts
- ❑ C.....Lara Croft

3. What's this, then, eh?
- ❑ A ....Prototype Game Boy
- ❑ B.....Dreamcast VMU
- ❑ C .....Sony PocketStation

4. What game was the first to feature the characters Ryu and Ken? .....

5. How many Shines are there to find in Super Mario Sunshine? .....

MEDIUM

6. What is the name of the virus from the original Resident Evil? .....

7. What is the name of the element used in Final Fantasy VII to enhance weapons and armour? .....

8. Who is Super Mario's evil opposite?.....

9. Which of these Xbox controllers is the correct one: A, B or C? .....

10. What's the name of this Capcom game? .....

HARD

11. Who's this guy?.....

12. What was the name of Atari's doomed 64-bit console? .....

13. And the name of Amstrad's doomed 16-bit console? .....

14. Who's the head honcho at id Software? .....

15. Who invented the game Pong? .....

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Where Episode II ends, your battle begins.

PlayStation.2

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